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BLACK SHEEP

ADVENTURES IN WEST AFRICA

BY

JEAN KENYON MACKENZIE

With Illustrations

BROOKLYN

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PREFACE

For more than five decades the Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America has maintained a work on the West Coast of Africa. From its original occupancy along the coast of what became, with the partition of Africa, the French Congo, Spanish Guinea, and the German Colony of Kamerun, this mission has gone inland from the coast of southern Kamerun. The first inland station was opened in 1893; since then, at intervals of a few years, other settlements were made, always making east; until in the early days of 1914 there was a missionary stationed among the Njem tribe in the Lomie district, about four hundred miles inland from the coast town of Kribi.

The station in Gaboon, of which mention is made in these letters, is now under the care of the French Protestant Society at work in the French Congo.

The ten years preceding the present war were a season of great activity and success in African missions. The Presbyterian mission in southern

Kamerun shared with its French neighbors to the south and its German neighbors to the north in the encouragements of this epoch. There was a tumult of development. The forest tribes and the tribes by the sea crowded into the tribe of God — and under black leaders; for in the past decade there had arisen to share with our corps of sixty white missionaries a company of four hundred black assistants.

Under the thatched roofs of the churches gather, here and there in the forest, Sabbath congregations of six thousand, of eight thousand. Self-support is a major intention; and in the year before the war the thirty thousand adherents of this mission gave, out of their primitive circumstance, nearly fifteen thousand dollars to the treasury. There was a large industrial plant at Elat; there were more than ten thousand pupils in the schools; there was a beneficent medical work at four stations. The clamor of the drums at unnumbered villages called the young to school of a week day, and broke the dark before the dawn of a Sunday with the call to assemble.

So much for the days before the war in a neighborhood which has been, since the war began, a battlefield.

It was the good fortune of the writer of the

following letters to have been a member of the West Africa Mission from June of 1904 to October of 1913, and to have witnessed, in more than one neighborhood of southern Kamerun, the amazing developments of this happy epoch.

If there is in this book too little a sense of the larger aspects of this great experience, too little a sound of the innumerable feet that follow the New Way, — be sure that the lack is deplored by the writer. These letters, addressed in the main to a father amply informed of the circumstance of his daughter's mission, had no other aim than that common effort of exiles — the daily renewing, by the expense of spirit in a letter, of the dearest companionships. To this end the letters were written, for this they smell of midnight oil — the oil in a lantern beside a cot in camps by the sea or by the trails of that equatorial forest; for this they smell of the salt fish put on the top of the load by the mail-carrier — that angel of missionaries. For in those days the angel of the mail did indeed regularly pass upon the paths of southern Kamerun.

Some of these letters appeared in *Woman's Work*, the organ of the women's missionary societies of the Presbyterian Church. Some appeared in the *Atlantic Monthly*, and to the stimulating appreciation of the editor of the

Atlantic is due that courage which offers such simple matter to the public in a book.

The writer acknowledges her indebtedness to her fellow-missionaries for the photographs included in this little book. And a manifold indebtedness she acknowledges: for benefits never to be numbered, for companionships never to be forgotten, for ideals of conduct and character ever to be emulated. To them she says, in the words of the old Mpongwe song: —

"I never forget you a single year,
I never forget you a single moon,
I never forget you a single day!"

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BLACK SHEEP

Part One

THE MAIL FROM THE BUSH

BLACK SHEEP

Part One

THE MAIL FROM THE BUSH

Liverpool, June 30, 1904.

Now, surely you would know that I am off to West Africa. My circumstance reeks of it. My room smells of the rubber that is to keep me dry. My shining tin trunks and my traveling-bed mark me missionary or government.

S.S. Sokoto, July 10.

It is late afternoon of one of our monotonous bright days. We sail always south toward a horizon of summer clouds that we never overtake; sometimes we pass dreary-looking steamers making their journey north, and sometimes lovely lady ships. One to-day, a four-masted bark with every sail set and as white in the sun as Hubert's stag in the forest, made us feel the mean vessel that we are.

Near by, but where he cannot see me, the chief engineer leans his long young body over the rail and talks to the stewardess in tones of the utmost cynicism about missionaries.

July 15.

Yesterday we called at Monrovia and this morning at another town. Monrovia makes quite a showing of clustered European houses, but the town at which we called to-day showed only native huts gray and squat. We lie off-shore; this is all open sea beach. All day we make along the coast; the stain of it is all day on the eastern rim of the bright circumference of the sea. Sometimes our course lies well in-shore; then we feel the land-swell, we see the white line of the inevitable surf, and back of this, the wall of the forest with its higher trees rising on bare trunks, a scanty and fernlike foliage. There is a level light of afternoon that picks out to an extraordinary degree the detail of this forest and drenches it in green.

The coast-line is for the most part low. The water hereabouts varies in color — gray, sometimes green, once emerald with amber in the lights. Once we came to anchor in jade. To-day the Kroos came about the ship in their canoes, brown bodies in brown canoes, all wet with the sea and struck with violet lights. They came up the ship's side and took passage as crew boys; it is they will handle the cargo when we come to discharge it.

July 19.

Past Axim, Secondi, Accra, and Lagos, and always beauty to hold the eye. From every settlement there come out to the ship boats manned by strapping black men that sit on the gunwales as a woman rides a horse, six on a side, each with a short paddle that is a trident, my dears, like Neptune's. They lean to the water in unison. In the stern stands the helmsman, his loin-cloth blowing about him, and the effect of all this is not just primitive, it is classic.

Many of the Africans wear a garment like the toga. I look at a row of them leaning over the rail (for our lower decks fore and aft are crowded with black passengers now) — I see them leaning looking out to sea with so much about them, in dress and gesture, of the Romans.

Among them are others: Mohammedans, effeminate-looking young fellows as easily distinguished by their hauteur as by their dress; and their dress is fine — hand-woven stuffs in stripes, lemon yellows striped in lavender, or tawny yellows striped in bronze.

July 21.

To-day I got off the ship and walked in Africa, my friends, and it smelt like a hothouse. This is Old Calabar. The government building and

the mission building are on a hill that slopes to the river; the native town falls into a hollow and climbs halfway up the next hill. I took a photograph, but you will never see from that how the mammoth trees father the little brown huts.

Batanga, Kamerun, July 31.

This is the receiving-port for our mission, and we landed yesterday at sunset. Here the ship lies about three miles off the coast, and we had to go ashore in a surf-boat. I never went anywhere in a surf-boat, and I must say when I saw them begin to hand the babies from the ladder to that intoxicated surf-boat I felt sick of the sea. You get into the boat any way you can. Presently we were all sitting where we had dropped, and we pulled away from the ship. The evening was golden, but the sea was pretty rough, and no one looked much at the scenery. There were five rowers on a side, and they were, it seems, very skillful in their management of the boat. But this was lost on me, and on my word of honor, when I saw the tremendous surf, and when the boat came broadside to wait the next wave, I began to take off my mackintosh. I thought we would end in the sea. But before I could get free of my coat the boat headed for

shore, ran up a mountain and down, and hard on the sand. Back again with the return of the water into the turmoil; but when the next wave carried us ashore again, natives ran into the surf to her prow and held her against the return, while others picked agitated missionaries off the sides. Mrs. Lehman had said to me, "Don't fight the native when he comes for you as we land." Fight him! I literally fell on his neck and embraced him all the way to dry land.

I never saw anything more tragic than the faces of the mothers watching their little ones being carried through the surf.

Batanga, August 7.

Here we have spent a week, all of us busy preparing for the journey into the bush. Some of the caravans have gone to Efulen and Elat, and we for Lolodorf leave to-morrow morning.

Yesterday our people — fifty carriers — came in from the bush. They came to shake hands with the new missionary, and looked at her gravely. There is at first something disquieting about their unsmiling regard, but presently one knows it to be friendly. Four of these men will carry my hammock, in relays of two; we shall be four nights on the road to the Lolodorf Station in the interior.

Lolodorf, Kamerun, Friday, August 12.

We left Batanga Monday morning at seven, and got into Lolodorf on Thursday at four in the afternoon. This means that we walked twenty miles each day and twenty-two the last day. I don't mean that I walked all the way; I had four hammock-carriers, but hammock-carriers reach their limit, and there are many steep places along the road; so I walked perhaps half the way, and yesterday I must have pegged along fourteen miles.

There are different sensations for different hours of the day on the road. There is the miserable 4.30 A.M. sensation. You are asked to get up, and the cot is snatched from under you. You start to wash and the basin is whisked off. Presently you sit down to breakfast by the light of a lantern, and as you eat, day breaks; well, you feel better. And when at six o'clock you take the road, in the dawn and the dew, it is heavenly. And so it is heavenly all day, in and out of the hammock swaying along a level path, or panting up an incline, in the forest or under the open sky, sunk in a valley with your road suspended behind you and before, or on some hilltop, with the mountains for your betters. In four days I saw more beauty than in all my life before. So the morning passes

gloriously. And at noon in the palaver house of some town you sit on a pole bed, or a sort of bamboo couch, with your knees up to your chin, and eat what your native cook has brought in the "chop-box," and it is good. You are ready for the road again. But by three o'clock you droop. At four you limp and drag. When you come to the native town where the tent is to be pitched, you sit on the ground until your men set up the camp-chairs, and after that, too, for you are too weary to move. Somehow you get to bed, and then it is 4.30 A.M.

All your meals, your uprisings, and your downsittings are witnessed and commented upon by all the natives in the town. I suppose they stand outside the tent and listen to us breathe. The tent is always pitched in the center of the town. In the morning Dr. Lehman paid our debts for water and vegetables when any had been bought, and our currency is matches or fishhooks or needles — needles are especially acceptable.

The forest is not lonely. There is a continual line of carriers coming from the east with ivory and rubber, — big men from Yaunde or Bene, fine physically, and just as untutored as you can conceive; indeed, more so than I could have conceived. Happily they speak Bulu, so I shall

be able to talk to them some day. The last day on the road it poured rain, the beginning of the rainy season. You can imagine struggling up hills and sliding down, "and when we came to the greasy ground we split ourselves in two." At four o'clock we arrived at Lolodorf. The native pastor, Ndenga, who had been left in charge of the station, had opened the house for us.

This is a beautiful place. Everywhere you look you see a detached hill that is a young mountain, and every little mountain is dressed in tropical opulence. Lolodorf is a military post; the fortifications are on an abrupt hill near by. The mission itself is on the land that rises from the river and is bounded by the river on the west and north. South of us runs the road. The station consists of two dwelling-houses, a church in which school meets as well, and between six and eight workhouses, tool-houses, or what not. The houses are all built bush-fashion — saplings set up for stanchions about three feet apart. The walls, of bark, — great sheets of brown bark, slatted horizontally with strips of bamboo, — are sewed to the stanchions with a rattan thread. No nails are used in the entire house; everything is sewed or tied with "bush rope" as I tell you. You can see daylight

THE HOUSE IN THE OLD CLEARING AT LOLODORF

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through the punctures and sometimes through the splits in the bark. The roof is a thatch of palm leaves, and the eaves are low. We are very cozy and look Elizabethan.

At this station there are the Lehmans; Ndenga, a native pastor from the beach, who has done very well by the work during the Lehmans' absence; myself, and the Reverend Mr. Heminger, who is due from Elat any day. The regular school work has not been taken up as yet; we are just getting the station in order.

The people here are largely Ngumba and Yaunde. These latter have been brought up by the government from the interior; the Yaunde are the carrier tribe, they and the Bene. In carrying to the beach, hundreds of carriers in the week sleep here. The mission has a palaver house for their benefit, and one of the most interesting opportunities is offered by this transient audience, a people absolutely virgin. There are dwarfs in this neighborhood, too, serfs of the Ngumba. Dr. Lehman journeys among them and we get them in the school.

I am to learn Bulu; the Ngumba and the Yaunde understand it, though it is not theirs. The Fang understand it, and it is the best thing to learn, since my ultimate station is uncertain.

August 12.

High above us looms the government hill, where three Germans live. The senior officer, a lieutenant, came to make his call on Sunday, and told me that he already felt well acquainted with me, as, indeed, I should think he might, since he had informed himself by document as to the age and condition, intent and station of "Missionar Schwester Mackenzie." After making this hopeful statement he became terribly embarrassed and went away. I was so sorry, for I had some impertinent questions to ask him, with a view to acquaintance.

There is a strange beauty about these people, especially the Yaunde and the Bene, — a beauty of body and of posture, of color and of draping. A thousand things would remind you of the art of the Renaissance. The way they dress their heads is so often like Botticelli. They have a surprising instinct for decoration; often the tattoo is a single figure on one side of the face, and their hair is dressed with no superstitious regard for the middle of their foreheads.

August 26.

Some belated carriers have brought mail. I feel as lavish as Ahasuerus when Esther entertained him — you shall have half of my kingdom.

Dear me, I see your embarrassment when my retainer makes good. My kingdom is Bitum, in the trousers I helped him make, and in no shirt at all if you insist on immediate delivery, for he is washing his shirt to-day. Which half will you have? I suppose you will be selfish and take the dressed half. He came to me this morning with a most virtuous air; he was going to wash his shirt! "Good," cried I, with enthusiasm. But where, he begged to know, was he going to get soap? I suppose this appears to you fair enough, but there is a root of evil. I asked of Mrs. Lehman, "May n't I give him soap this once?" "Well, if you do, tell him that he is not to have soap again; that he is to buy it out of his wages." I looked at Mrs. Lehman and wondered. Did she forget her first struggle with the Bulu language?

September 1.

There is no organized church here, but the people are moving that way. On a Sunday there will be some four hundred of an audience — more brown arms and legs, closer packed, than the church was built to hold. Every day people come to make confession of faith and to be received into the class for instruction. This initial step is a long one; you step out of your tribe and its custom into the tribe of God and its custom. But

you clean up your record before the transfer is effected; you pay your debts, you settle your quarrels, you confess your misdeeds to your husband, and you suffer, often enough, your beatings.

There are Macedonian signals from a town about twenty miles from here, Nshicko's town; he is the headman. Nshicko is middle-aged. He, with several men like himself, well-to-do, was converted. Each put away all his wives but one — and superfluous wives mean property; they formed the bulk of these men's possessions — and they entered school here. This was before the Lehmans' furlough. This last year the men have spent in their town, where they have told their people "the news." Now they come to us for help; sixty of their townspeople believe. I wish you might have been with us the night this deputation waited on us as we sat about the lamp — three middle-aged men, two of them with loin-cloths, the other in a white nightshirt. This last was an old man, silent and mild, with a droop half patient and half sad, and a sort of austere mysticism that quite awed me.

We are short-handed here, but we have sent Ndenga to Nshicko's town, where he will start a school and preach.

Now I study Bulu and teach the primary

class in a school. Some of you smile at this and so do I, but not all the time. I have over seventy pupils, some young ones and some grown men and women, — poor long-legged men who sit patiently through the morning while I explain with a chart and a pointer the difference between *e* with an accent and without. It is my aim and my passion to keep the grown people up with the children. I can't tell whether this is the fruit of compassion or of the natural enmity between one generation and the next. There is a man called Zambe, and I mean that he shall read if it is to be done by sheer will.

Lolodorf, September 8.

I realized the other day that I am not giving you much sense of the externals of "Life in Africa." Too bad, for they are understood to be so thrilling. Truly I could write you a thriller if I saw things in a certain light. The other evening I was talking with Mrs. Lehman, and we agreed that we could get up a very moving account of our affairs. It would read like this: —

A missionary, his wife, and two children live in one room of a three-roomed house. They eat, read, and work in one room in company with a single woman missionary, who occupies the third room. The walls of the house are made of sheets

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of bark, which are split here and there so that the sun-rays penetrate in swaths of light which threaten the life and reason of the missionaries. Moreover, the roof, which is made of palm-leaf thatch, has given way here and there, so that in the rainy season the water falls into the soup and on the heads of the missionaries. (On the head of the little single missionary — think of it, she who never liked to get her head wet.) When it rains, the sheep and the goats take refuge under the house, and at night these heathen beasts clamor. When the single missionary puts her hand into her wall-pocket to pull out a handkerchief (an innocent luxury which she allows herself), she pulls out a cockroach as big as a mouse — and so on, horrors upon horrors. But I spare you.

This is the wet season, one of them. Every afternoon it rains terrifically. Long before the rain booms upon the roof the rush of it may be heard in the forest, and there, among the great trees, the gray army advances. When it has passed and the sun comes out, the heat is pretty severe.

Sunday, September 11.

Yesterday I took to myself and went for a long walk. I meant to say to Bitum, "I will walk

presently." I said something in Bulu, very proudly. Afterwards Mrs. Lehman explained to me, between her laughs, that I had asked to walk in hell. (Dear Margaret, it was their own hades, that they manufactured for their primitive uses before ever the missionary appeared on the scene.) Small wonder that Bitum had looked at me oddly, shaking his head. I suppose he thought it was time to call a halt.

September 12.

Already these hills are less strange and this forest — I know the secret of many paths and shall soon know all. A country and a circumstance are soon familiar; only people are perpetually mysterious. I thought about this so much to-day when I was plodding along in the mud, the hills about me blue with evening, and we passed some carriers — Yaunde women, nude but for leaves, and beautifully formed, as so many Yaunde women are. The carrying of loads does not encourage sight-seeing, and by the day's end the eyes of a carrier don't wander far from the path; so these women were passing me, heads down. But I spoke the word of greeting and they looked up. Their eyes met mine. Ah, how far away the dim islands of their entity, and between us what expanse of "unplumbed, salt,

estranging sea." Often, in meeting such women, I am conscious that a word has passed between us. They go on, I believe from my heart, not ungreeted. But our intercourse is hardly what might be called genial. It is very oppressively sad; there never was one that smiled at me. And truly youth seems most desolate; the younger the girl the more morose her gaze. Perhaps the capacity for pain is the essential jewel of Yaunde youth. The Ngumba people seem much less tragic.

September 15.

To-night I was reading about Stanley's search for Livingstone, when suddenly I asked myself, "Am I really in the country of which he writes?" I went to the window to look out, to see, my dears, if I were. It was raining heavily, but for all that the moonlight penetrated the clouds and fell with a most impartial ray and no glamour. There were the wan paths leading from little gray huts to little gray huts ; there were the innumerable banners of the plantain trees, and the slim, upstanding pawpaws, and beyond these the great columns of the trees of the forest, all patient under the vehement rain. And I knew perfectly, and for the first time, that I am in Africa.

THE GOOD PATH

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Nowadays during half of the school hours I teach several classes in the primer. Zambe has graduated to the primer and reads, with inexplicable pauses and with strange agitation of his arms and legs, sentences of three words each. Always his eyes plead with me not to desert him in this adventurous country of learning. Do you know, I am happy in this: that all these people are real and individual. One is clever, another is stupid; another's lips, when he recites, tremble with trepidation; another, bless her little heart, has a little frightened pulse that throbs in her neck when she grapples with the chart. Who could resist such allurements, such weaknesses, such eagerness?

October 3.

To-day on the road I saw a woman so small, so perfect, so black, and so comely that I looked at her with wonder. She walked with her arms folded, before a big carrier. She wore a leaf bandage supported by a crimson strap which held in place, low on her back, one of those curious bustles which are the pride of the people from the interior, — a thick, even glossy, bunch of dried grass that looks like black horsehair, and is jaunty to a degree. Her dark skin was in perfect condition; her beautiful slender limbs moved

with elastic decision; above her slim shoulders her head was poised with a sort of nervous pride; and her hair was charmingly and elaborately dressed. Fairly she seemed to glitter in the sunlight.

October 4.

The other evening as I sat writing there came from outside a sound of vehement voices. So I went out into the night, where the moonlight lay broad and even on the paths and on the banners of the plantain trees and on the little thatched church. The noise came from the dark interior of the church, through its doors and windows, which are never closed, lacking the wherewithal. Presently Mrs. Lehman called to me from the house that Ngya, one of the early converts, was in the church talking to a company of carriers; and then I could distinguish his voice, urgent and rapid in the languid night, and the occasional unanimous response of the carriers. "You have understood?" he would ask. "We have understood!" they would roar in concert. Standing there, listening, I wished that you might hear too.

On Sunday, at the women's meeting, some twenty carriers strolled in and sat back against the bark wall, where they presented a great

array of arms and legs. Mrs. Lehman told the women of that illuminating quarrel between Abraham and Lot, — we were sure of the carriers during that time, for these people respond readily to the Old Testament. At the close of the service the rain hindered our return to the house, and while we waited for the storm to pass, Mrs. Lehman played on the little organ. Presently there was about her a wall of great strapping carriers, so pleased with the magic of the keys, and with the brightness of her hair, that they looked at one and the other smiling. They had never heard the Word of God before, and they turned their faces on Mrs. Lehman with a sort of animal innocence, — such an unwinking, amazed interest as I could hardly have imagined as human, though I have seen horses look so before they were broken. Then such huddlings together, such linkings of arms, such leanings of friend against friend, such exclamations one to the other in their virile, ungoverned voices, such sudden laughs of jocund wonder. "Zambe, he who created us, is not one to endure fetish! Is that a true word?" — and they laughed.

So Mrs. Lehman talked to them and I looked at them till the rain had moderated — and we were going. But one thing they must know — What was that fruit? — pointing to the revolving

globe. Then they were told how the earth is round, and all the rest of that unlikely legend of its relation to the sun. So we left them, and they went on their way in that new world which is round, and was made by a God who rejects medicine (fetish). They may pass this way again.

It will be Thanksgiving season at home when you read this, and so it will be with us. The other Sunday Mrs. Lehman held a Thanksgiving service with the women; they were to tell of the mercies they had enjoyed during the past year. So they assembled on Sunday afternoon in their motley garments. At one service I saw a woman with pink corsets over a very proper dress, but there was no such indiscretion on this particular Sunday. These were some of the reasons given as cause for thanksgiving, and from among all I have taken one of every kind: —

One woman said that her child had died, and that she had found comfort in the House of God.

Another that, in answer to prayer, the animals no longer molest her garden.

Another, that when she had visited a distant clan, ignorant of the things of God, and was taunted by them for her belief, she had been given strength to withstand their taunts.

Another, that while she used to have to work hard and had none to help her, now God had sent her some one from the beach.

There is an insult in vogue here which gives rise to the most deadly quarrel, — it is to "ta." I am sure I can't say why it is so effective; it is all a matter of words; but several women gave thanks for this: that they had suffered without retaliation when told that their husbands or their mothers were "taed."

Pretty, smiling Malinga, wife of Ze, was thankful that she and her husband had been given grace to carry loads for the governor, and that God had put it into the heart of the governor to allow them to rest on the Sundays.

There is one old woman who has held my attention from my first sight of her, — so unhappy and so poor does she appear, — so like an ancient maltreated orphan. She rose in her bits of rags to say that she had ten children, five of them were dead and five of them scorned her, — God helped her bear it. Her name is Wawa; I go often to see her since, to make up for her children. Of course we do not converse very much, since she speaks only Ngumba, and I speak "three words" of Bulu, but in spite of such limitations we seem to be in a fair way to make friends. She told me yesterday that we were "one person,"

which I thought a rather extreme inference, but Mrs. Lehman said not to be frightened, that it was a not uncommon expression and entailed no responsibilities.

Well, these were some of the reasons why the women thanked God; and some of them, you will agree, went deep. If many were quaint and fantastic, and if some were grossly material, why, so must many of our own appreciations seem to God.

October 28.

Yesterday being very fine I walked farther than at other times on the government road. And not I alone — but many others walked there. You should have seen one big beautiful Bene woman who stopped to look after me. Her frame was large, but rather thin, and her face was sharply outlined, with a fine line from the ear to the chin; her eyes were merry and a something jocund in her entire aspect was accentuated by her headdress, which was a matter of ridges encircling her head and set at an angle, — so that you would have said she wore a cap, tilted. Now I have the word for her — she was gallant — she was charmingly gallant. She looked at me as though I were a toy, and asked Bitum, what was I? and when Bitum told her,

"a woman," she laughed, saying, "E ké!" — which is to exclaim, "Did you ever!"

I can't tell what I have given you of my circumstances and of this beautiful and awful country. I wonder if you get any sense at all of that world through which I walk of a late afternoon under the giant trees and by the rows of little brown huts — all their roofs smoking at this hour with the supper fire. And of the daily contact with these people, who crowd about my knees to learn their letters — dirty, patched up here and there with sulphur for their skin diseases, deformed especially as to their feet, wrapped in rags in this cold weather, and as individual as you or I, as dear to God as you are. I only wish they were as dear to me.

To-night I thought it felt cold, and then (this is a simple true story) I thought of Jane, and remembered that in a like circumstance she would look at the thermometer. So I did (for Jane's example is potent with one still) and it stood at seventy. Just the same, I know I am cold.

November 4.

These people are not without manner; indeed, they have a great deal. They greet one, and take leave; they clasp hands; they appreciate by fa-

cial expression and by little formal ejaculations the conversation of the missionary even when it is not understood by them, or, being understood, bores them; and all this in a very finished fashion. They have, I think, a real courtesy of the heart. But their conventions are so unlike ours that we often have mutual misgivings, and they infer, I fancy, that we have been badly brought up. I take lessons wherever I may, and hope to be able, eventually, to enter and to leave a town, having properly saluted the inhabitants and having announced my departure in form.

A town in this neighborhood consists of two rows of houses with a street between. The houses differ very little. They are all low huts of a room each, — say, a matter of eighteen feet by seven, — with two openings like windows in the center of each long wall. The framework is of sapling poles, the walls of plates of a bark which is yellow when newly cut, but which soon tones to a silver brown, as do the leaf-mats which form the roof and make a thatch in appearance very like a straw thatch. The eaves project beyond the walls some two feet, and hang low; it is almost always necessary to stoop in passing under them. Certainly you must stoop to enter the door of the house, and at the same time must step over

the sill, which will be anywhere from one to two feet from the ground. Inside you will find yourself on a mud floor in an interior persistently brown. For furniture there will be several beds made of split poles laid in rows on two logs which serve as legs; another log serves as pillow; and all these are brown and polished with use. From the roof will be hanging mysterious bundles done up in great plaintain leaves brown with smoke; gourds, brown by nature, I suppose; brown baskets for peanuts and corn. On the ground there will be a fire and a woman evolving a meal; but there will be no chimney in the roof, which explains a good many things, and why the unseasoned visitor presently makes for the street. An average street will be from fifty to sixty feet wide, perfectly clean and generally barren, necessarily so when it is a section of the excellent government road.

There is, now that I think of it, quite a difference in character between such a travel-worn town and one where the little forest path, which has wandered into the street at one end, makes out at the other into the green shade. In such a town there may be oil palm trees; there will be, back of the houses or near them, little groves of plantain trees, their great banner-like leaves murmuring in the wind or drooping, green like

the inner curve of a wave, in the still air. But most gardens are at a distance from the town. Thus, if you pass at eleven of a morning there will be no life stirring more than the silly coatless sheep; while at five of an afternoon every house will give you a greeting.

December 2.

Any one passing through Benzork's village the other day would have witnessed a nice civilized scene. A white man going about the country in the interest of rubber culture, laboring with the natives not to cut the vines down, but to tap them, had pitched his tent in the middle of this village, and so, white-man fashion, owned the place. Here he might be seen of an evening sitting outside his admirable little tent, playing pleasant airs on a cornet, — an accomplishment which might have endeared him to the entire community; but that he set little store by popularity you will agree when his deeds come to light. One night he could not sleep for the noise of rats in a neighboring house. The house was empty, and the stranger found the rats among the fetishes of poor Benzork, who is off in Bulu. There is a flourish to the effect that he found some of his food hidden away by the rats in the treasured skulls. Be that as it may, the white

man brought the skulls out of the house and arranged them in a line beside the path, sixteen poor skulls amazed at the stars. Behind these he set up two *mingunemelan* — small wooden idols — sitting passive among these ruins. So I saw them next morning, and so they were seen of common eyes, both of men and women. Who shall say what thoughts burned in the hearts of the men of Benzork's town, or with what emotions the Christians looked at this shame of the past? For myself, I could not look at these things of darkness under the morning sun with any lightness of heart. Mr. Heminger saw Benzork's little daughter step off the path to walk directly in front of the line, — a very bold, bad action indeed, and entirely in keeping with the little girl's reputation, for had not she once slapped the faces of the unwinking *mingunemelan*, the very same that watched her from behind the skulls? And did she not, for this offense, suffer a sore disease of her guilty arm? Presently the fetishes were gathered up by black soldiers, who took them up the government hill, and from there, by order of authority, they were thrown into the river; which is a reason, if another were needed, why one had best not drink river water. One evening after these events I saw the white man sitting in front of his tent playing a pleasing

air, in which he paused to bow to me with mild courtesy. Benzork has not yet returned to his desecrated hearth; but one of his little daughters, three years of age, has been sent to him that she may be turned over to a man who has bought her.

Benzhuli is a young Ngumba who assists in the school and has many talents. He is the dressmaker of this region. He is very kind and gentle with stupid little children. For a long time he has been paying goods on a girl, — guns and goats and many hundreds of little iron objects called *Nsuba*, that are currency for women. One day he hears that Minko, son of a big, bad headman, is in the running and likely to win out, for all that Benzhuli has the start of him in goods. Benzhuli takes a vacation to talk this palaver, and finds that the people of the girl's village favor the other man. And when the girl says she will have Benzhuli or none, they tie her up with bush rope, and make off with her into the forest. You can think if Benzhuli is happy. He comes back to Lolodorf, and an account of the affair goes "up on the hill," that is, to the government post. And one day along the road comes a file of people, the girl with her people and Minko with his, pretty well laden with goods, — Benzhuli's goods, which they expect to pay back, as they certainly expect to

"stand" in the palaver. But not so. The governor listens to them and he listens to Benzhuli, and then, for all he is German, conducts himself like a true Ngumba "cutter of palavers." Placing two sticks on the ground, he names them for the rivals, and "Which will you have?" he asks the girl. She, in the face of her oppressors, takes the Benzhuli stick. "You belong to me," says Benzhuli (Dr. Lehman had heard him talking the day before to Minko about "our woman").

So they come down the hill together. Presently they appear at the station, Benzhuli a very smiling school-teacher and dressmaker, but poor Mvunga sad and shrinking and timid, as how could she be else? It is no light matter to break through the custom of a country, and women are sorry pioneers. Since then her husband the dressmaker has made her a garment, and her husband the teacher has taught her the alphabet, and she quite blooms in school, for she is a pretty girl with more than average poise.

I have told you of these two events because they are of the most vital importance to these people. In all the community there is wagging of heads, — the heads of the elders, — for the old things are passing away. Two weeks ago last Sunday there was held in the church, after the morning service, a meeting called by the

Ngumba Christians at their own instigation, to consider the giving and taking of wives without price. I cannot understand Ngumba, so I did not know what was said, nor do I think that the missionaries look for any material results from this meeting. But consider what it means that there should be a few men in any African community who voice such ideas. You cannot fancy how deeply complicated this marriage system is nor how many ramifications there may be to a "woman palaver." The other day Mr. Heminger was sitting in a hut talking with two members of his congregation, wives of one husband. He was talking to them about their sins, which were of an obvious character: the younger woman had been accused of stealing food. Then he turned to the elder, Wawa, she of the ten children, five of them dead and five of them cruel. "Wawa," said he, "why cannot you live at peace with this wife of your husband? Why are you always quarreling?" (They are notorious scrappers.) "Well," said Wawa, "she was bought with one of my children and I cannot forget it."

By the last steamer there came from America the latest translation into Bulu of Mark, Luke, and John; we already have a new Matthew and Acts. To-day these were put on the market. And what joy in the little Christian communi-

ties, what haste to buy the pearl of great price, what caressing of little black books, and how Ngwa's teeth shone, and his eyes, when in a state of exalted extravagance he bought two, calling out to his wife, "I give you this!" I think that this deep, African joy in His Word must be a very flower of prayer before God.

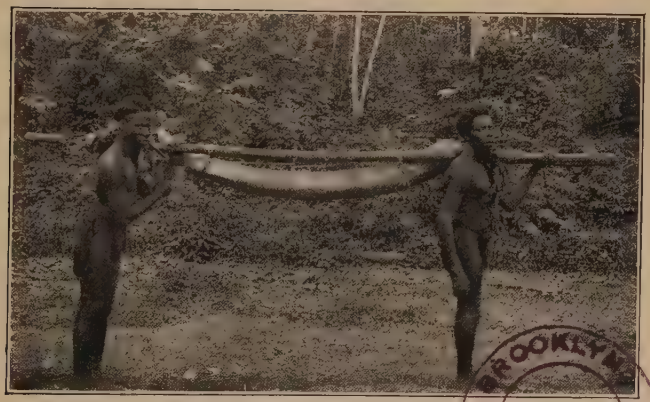
December 23.

When I first came here, — with our four days' trip through the forest like four green doors shutting out life as I know it, I thought Lolodorf sunk out of the world; but now I see better; it is really a most cosmopolitan region subject to most animated events. The great highway that passes our gate is a river of life, — a mingling of many waters drawn from the dark places of the interior. The long files of carriers, that make from the interior to the beach and back again, stop in this neighborhood overnight; many sleep in the station palaver house, which was built that they might rest in it, and so hear the Word of God. Always when I walk out of an afternoon and meet the caravans coming or going, laden with ivory or rubber or trade goods, — men and women so differentiated by tribal distinction that even a novice may know one brown people from another, — I feel a breath of the air from

the interior pass with them; you know the feeling one has about a ship from foreign lands. The work at Lolodorf is very much under this spell of "unhappy far-off things"; our horizons, every way but seaward, trouble the imagination and allure it, too; when we look toward the sea we are all, I suppose, at home.

I very much admire Mrs. Lehman's dealings with these Ngumba women, and I am trying to learn of her. I am trying, too, to get into some sort of vital touch with them. I make them visits, sitting in their huts watching them grinding seeds, or mashing plantains, or fussing over kettles of food which boil over little fires on the clay floor of the hut. Sitting like this, I am often silent, but they do not seem to mind that, — they are too primitive to be oppressed by silence. Sometimes we talk as well as we may, and I was taking account last night of the subjects upon which we touch. They are reduced to these: their children, — we talk about them with great success, — many women have none, which is more than commonly sad here; their labors, in the garden and in the house; God, their experiences of his goodness, and mine; subjects, you will agree, worn with the handling of the generations; but always it seems that there are new children, and new labors, and to these women

A BULU MOTHER



YAUNDE MEN CARRYING AN IVORY

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all the goodnesses of God are new. So we try to get together.

January 11, 1905.

I have come from an evening stroll under a half-moon directly overhead. In front of the palaver house were five little fires, and about these sat groups of carriers, — I cannot imagine why, as the night is stifling. But there they sit in brown huddles talking and laughing in a muffled sort of fashion, — and so they will sit doubtless for hours. The talking keeps up in the palaver house pretty far into the night. By the boys' house was another fire, and all these fires made brilliant rents in the soft veil of the moonlight. Ndenga's door was open, so I looked in. There sat his little sister, sitting very straight and thin beside a small, smoking thread of light, — a lamp with a round wick and without a chimney. She was sewing on a little dress for herself; and I felt, in her isolation and her occupation, the invisible bars which shut the minister's little girl away from the little heathen girls in the town.

January 14.

Nzhia and his wife have given birth to a child, — which is an Ngumba account of the event. You, being provincial, cannot be ex-

pected to feel the weight of the news, but you are to believe me when I tell you how nice a happening it is. I heard of it late Thursday afternoon, when the man-child was, say, an hour old; our friends and neighbors were galloping to see it. But I sent over word that I would call the next day; and I sent, too, a little note carefully dated, that it might serve, if need be, for certificate of birth; this I pinned to some superb red flannel which came in my box. The next day Mrs. Lehman and I walked over to call — and oh, the little darling! The father saw us while we were yet afar off, and put the best robe on his son, — one that Mrs. Lehman had sent them, — so when we arrived the baby lay in state, in a little white night-slip, with the red flannel folded into a neat small square which ornamented his stomach. The red flannel was most becoming; little black babies are prettier than little white ones. This one slept, — and oh, wonder of wonders that amazed your missionary, it looked like its mother! There sat Malinga, drooping a little, her customary lovely smile touched with a difference, — a kind of wan happiness; and there on its grandmother's bare knees slept the baby, his little face lit by his mother's smile, — reduced to such a faint flicker of sweetness and light.

January 20.

The Lipperts are here, — I go to the beach with Dr. Lippert on Friday next. They tell me that the road has been cut through the greater part of the forest, where before there was a thread of a path.

You should have seen a small agitated man who appeared this afternoon with a tale of his wife and her death by *Ngi*, which is a form of magic. He wore a cloth from his waist down, and a shirt; he was not conspicuously a savage in aspect, but oh, the dreadful dark heart of him as he told — with the utmost animation touched with some sort of sinister pride, a kind of complacency that took account of what distinction there may be in such direct dealings with the powers of darkness — the tale of the poor woman's end. Dreadful little man!

West Africa, Sunday, January 29.

We left Lolodorf for our conference at the beach at midnight on Thursday. There was a veiled moon, — a very diffused light, — so that the path was perfectly plain and not checkered. Nights are so wonderful! This one, on the wan path, with the dark forest rising from it on either side, the sighing of the forest, the breathing of it, the heavy, melancholy drippings of it,

— you cannot know what it was like. And then the occasional overflow of the moonlight escaping the clouds and lying a spilt, opalescent glory on the road; the huddle of brown huts by the way giving out odors of wood fire and showing firelight from all the cracks; and everywhere by the road, in the open spaces before the houses, at the foot of the great cottonwood trees, the little fires built by the carriers, — little fires showing violet lights and crimson, and pallid blue, — hundreds of little jewel fires, and about them the ground black with sleeping men. So the carriers sleep; they cast aside their burdens and their loin-cloth, "and so good-night!"

I had one carrier too few, — three instead of four, — to bear the hammock by twos, and so I was forced to walk a great deal, and you cannot think how strange a Limbo I traversed. I am sure that I saw quite a thousand firelit sleepers.

When we reached Zenebot, which is a big palaver house on top of the mountain which we had climbed all night and where we had our coffee, we found two white men, — one a big cocoa-plantation man hunting laborers; he had over two hundred in tow, under way for Victoria; the other was a trader who hates "the whole bloody coast."

All day until noon down the mountain with

the talking river hidden in the ravine. Beautiful more than I can say, but oh, the missionary's game knee! By noon, under the shade of trees, I lay on the ground, and could not walk any farther for fear I should weep and hurt everybody's feelings. "Go on to Lam," said I, "and get two men." Bekalli was so kind to me; he was one of the three carrying me, and he assured me that they were good for the rest of the way. So we went on, and presently I was crossing a river on a fallen tree, and there was Lam! Ngoé, the teacher at Lam, has a very grand hut, and I lay on his table until my bed arrived. Do not ask any questions about Lam; it is doubtless an imposing village, but I was sunk in deep waters of rest all that afternoon. In the evening we had a little meeting; it was nice. We left Lam the next morning an hour before dawn, under a resigned moon; my fourth carrier, the lost man, had arrived, and so I was free to ride in the hammock when I chose.

Batanga, February 1.

That day — Saturday — was such a happiness, a green curtain between me and the night in the native house. I loathe sleeping in a native house; you can't think how glad of my tent I am. Mfan was our next stop, a big new

town built by the order of the governor to secure safety for travelers in this great stretch of bush. Here I had a palaver house all to myself; only I had a woman sleep in the house with me, because Dr. Lippert was disturbed to have me alone. On the Sunday, we had meetings among the trees of the forest; there were people in the audience, too. That evening, at dusk, I held my first meeting. There were perhaps forty women, very boisterous. We were by the river; there were fireflies about in the grass, and in the far, far sky small early stars. The next day we stopped at noon, "and the rain fell upon that house"; we were glad to be sheltered that night. For lack of sufficient shelter in the town, — a miserable huddle of huts, — four of our caravan slept in one half of my house, one of them a woman. When the rats made too much noise, I turned on my electric lamp, and was grateful that my net prevented me from seeing them. We made Batanga at a little after noon of the next day.

There were a good many Bulu in the caravan, and they were such fun. Poor Bitum suffered so much with his feet and looked, so comically, the clumsy rustic that he is. Some of the men were beauties — Bulu from Elat, picked men, full of humor, whimsical to a degree. They think it

would be nicer if I were to be married. They asked how old I am; they said that they "saw me beautiful"; that for an old person, I was very "new," and still able to do many things.

March 24.

To-day I started out on one of the main roads, and as I passed through the towns I put my head in at every brown hut and said who would might follow me; that I meant to hold a meeting in Biali's town. Presently I might be seen to lead a straggling single file of women, — yet not so single either, for almost every one had a child slung to her shoulder by a strap. To these were added a few small boys who very much admire me. So we walked along the road, which left the open, sunny spaces of the town and dropped into a hollow of the forest, very cool and green. And arriving at Biali's town, we consorted under a roof which will some day, perhaps, develop walls. Now it is open to all the winds, which is more of an advantage than you are likely to realize. The missionary, seated on a gin box,[1] was sufficiently elevated above her audience, which sat upon the ground. So I led the little meeting in a species of Bulu of which

[1] Boxes in which bottles of gin are carried inland.

it is a shame so much as to speak. I spoke to them as well as I might about Christ and the Good Samaritan.

On the way home we passed a sick carrier who was being left by his fellows on the open road, and with no more comfort than he was likely to get from a fire they had built him. When we neared him his friends were running from him, though I took them to be running from an impending rain; but a lad who had come with me from the meeting knew his people better, and the coincidence moved him. Here was his chance to be a good Samaritan! And I left him calling out shame upon the priest and the Levite, and holding out to the sufferer glittering possibilities of relief at the hands of Dr. Lehman. Don't ask for the end of this story, for I was running home under an angry sky — you know that there was only one Samaritan in the parable

April 10.

To-day I called upon my neighbors. Most of them were cooking at that time of day, — four in the afternoon, — sitting at the openings of their houses, on little gin boxes worn dark and shiny by continual use. They sit, ordinarily, a little to one side of the opening, their legs visible from the street, but not their faces unless they

lean out to give a greeting. When I step over the high sill, I sit on the other side of the opening on a similar box. Sometimes they are peeling plantains with characteristic deft movements. These they drop into an iron pot that goes presently onto the log fire between two beds, — there are generally four beds in each hut, with a fire between each two. The African likes to sleep up against a flame, and one of the most haunting things in this country is the odor exhaled by the tight-shut houses at night, of wood fire and crowded humanity.

Do you wonder what I say to the women when I sit in their huts? You could hardly evolve matter so simple — it is the fruit of the soil. There is an old blind woman whom I visit, — and she must always hear how, when she goes to heaven, she will see. Nothing is real to her but that prospect, and she wheedles it out of me in twenty different ways. Because she may not see this world, — in which she has played a rather unamiable part, — I talk to her about the beauty and goodness of Christ; but not as I would have talked before I came here. It always ends by my assuring her that when she reaches the town of God she will see. "Then I shall not go *so?*" she asks, tapping on the mud floor with her staff.

April 13.

Mrs. Lehman and I have been out in the moonlight. We were walking on the road, where there are hundreds of carriers sleeping to-night. Their little fires were already built and their brown bodies heaped about them. As we passed the big government palaver house, some of them called out that they wanted to hear the Word of God. So Mrs. Lehman talked to them. I suppose that about fifty formally listened. They were a typical crowd, except for some Hausa men who were shockingly overdressed, as usual; one of these very ostentatiously withdrew from the scene of our heathen rites. All the air was thick with smoke so that the plantain trees by the roadside were veiled, and between us and the high illumination of the moon there was a blue haze. They listened to Mrs. Lehman with their characteristic voluble and animated attention, and when she came to an end and started home, they complained. "I must go home to my three children in the house." This explanation spread from man to man, and gratified every one, as I have seen it do any number of times. "Aha! She has three children! She goes to her three children!" And they were all as pleased as Roosevelt would be. I wonder — what is my excuse for going home?

April 17.

To-day has been one, to some extent, of events. The dwarf boy who has just entered school drank the medicine for the donkey's sores. It hurt dreadfully, and we are afraid it will make him homesick, — not exactly the medicine, for he got rid of that right away, but the event. And one of the monkeys got loose and came to school. It made the children laugh and play. He bit a boy and so the teacher put him out.

Now it is afternoon. I call to Sanyana, a schoolboy (I am studying by the river to-day), "You have n't killed a fish?" And he calls back from the raft of logs which he has tied to a tree which runs out into the river, "Yes," meaning "Yes, I have n't." I can't help but fancy that he should be working and is n't; but then *I* should be studying Bulu and am not, so I keep quiet. Presently in the silence vivid birds come out from under overhanging branches and skim the water. They are fishermen. And as the sun gets lower, great stretches of the river are silver, and over the shaken surface float yellow leaves and little detached weeds, like little barks with green silk sails full of a wind I cannot feel. These weeds grow in back-water and are of a delicate green like jade, but luminous.

April 18.

A few minutes ago a black boy arrived on the porch in a great hurry, and set about wiping his feet like a well-trained dog before entering the house. There was quite an air of bustle about this performance. I supposed the boy to have arrived on an errand of importance. As he came into the lighted room it proved to be Bitum. "What do you hunt?" asked I. "My hat," said he; "I hate to sleep far away from my hat. My hat and I, we sleep in one place!" So off he went in the moonlight, with his atrocious hat under his arm. But there was something very quaint about the eagerness of this quest.

Elat, May 3.

Here I am where I have come to study proper Bulu among the Bulu people. Elat is over fifty miles east of Lolodorf. I must say the study of Bulu worries me. I am working at it with a will, but more will than anything else. I sit down in a palaver house and listen to the men talk. Yesterday I heard a most animated palaver about a woman and one Ndungo, and a goat. Bits of sugar-cane stalk were spread upon the ground as the characters took the stage. The woman enters — a strip of stalk. Ndungo enters — another strip laid down with a discrim-

inating squint of the eye; the goat, placed at a safe distance; and then four little strips laid down and adjusted with a final pat — these were the woman's children. What drama was enacted by these animated strips is beyond my guessing, but they moved about their little stage to the disapproval of their audience. Truly their doings would seem to have been shocking. Only one man laughed at the play, and him I took to be Ndungo in the flesh, who could not see himself so dramatic without audible joy and self-approval. Presently the man who was declaiming stopped to look at me, all his gesture at rest and the fire of his eloquence flickering. "Why is white woman here?" inquired he.

"I have sat down to hear the Bulu speak, but if you hate to have me here I shall go."

How he liked this reply and took me for the nice sensible person that I am! "That is good," said he. "You may stay and listen to me"; which I did.

I am trying to get a little Bulu girl to live in the house with me, who will, it may be, love me. But I cannot, of course, exact this exercise of her affections, and I shall have to be very severe and very watchful if I get her.

I must tell you — Malinga and Mboshi came over to Elat from Lolodorf with their husbands

who are studying for the ministry under Mr. Dager. And these two women going out from their own country found all the world strange, and Elat a Babylonish city. When they heard of my coming they lay awake at nights, and when I came their homesick hearts fairly altered the quality of their voices. When I sit down with them in their hut, the gossip of Lolodorf recounted by me, and sung antiphonally by them, is nothing short of lyric.

May 7.

To-day I held a meeting in Mrs. Lippert's stead. I walked through a charming bit of forest to the village. A man beat on the call drum the call to women, and I waited in the palaver house for them to come. The sun beat cruelly on the roof and all the fresh air hung around outside the two openings into the street, fore and aft. Presently the women began to arrive, — a brown leg thrust into one of the openings, a brown body to follow, until all the palaver beds are filled with women. I took mental notes on the attire of one, that I might report to you. She wore a bustle of long ribbon grass, dyed orange and black, and attached to her person by two strips of deerskin, these hanging in two ribbons from her hips to her knees.

Two leopard's teeth hung at her neck from a necklace of elephant's hair. Draped on one side of her puffed and beaded hair hung a string of some forty or more dog's teeth. Two long feathers were thrust in her hair. All her face and neck glistened with palm oil. To have been complete, she should have had brass coils from her knees to her ankles, a tremendous big brass ring or two, and to have been rubbed with red powder from the redwood tree. She was, even lacking these characteristic embellishments, a sufficiently interesting figure. I have taken no account of her tattooing; it was a matter of fishes pretty generally distributed. The other women were much as she was except in the matter of age, which seems to vary here as elsewhere.

May 14.

I begin to be miserably fluent and much less conscious of my medium. I can quite address myself to the things which are the objects of words rather than just deal in the words themselves, as I have done most of the time before now. Now I am conscious always of adjusting my mode of thought, of seeking some trail which will lead me to the hidden huts where these people live in their forest of ignorance. Elat has been of great benefit to me.

May 18.

Yesterday a big caravan came in with loads and the place was very animated when the men came for their pay. There was the usual palaver about the man who hated to carry the food kettle, when it came his turn, and so left it behind. I never knew a caravan but had one such grievance, and this morning there is a big palaver in Mr. Dager's study. The man, who sits sprawled out on the white man's beautiful matting, declares that the men who stand about him, — with their arms folded or with right hands on left shoulders and left hands on right shoulders, which is the most characteristic of attitudes, — walked on Sunday. The accuser cries to Heaven, but the accused stand very much at their ease. One is draped like a Roman and holds his elbow with a ringed hand — brass rings. Another has a white trade comb stuck in his hair. He has a new loin-cloth, and no winter wind of criticism can penetrate that. Another has a white yachting cap above no considerable costume; he had, I should judge, hoped to complete it when he should be paid, and now there is a hitch. In the center of the room stands the only thoroughly primitive type — a brown lad with a bit of bark cloth to cover his nakedness, and his elaborately dressed head turning this way and that,

while he wonders at the furnishings of the white man's house.

June.

The other day I went to see the dwarfs. Nzhia went with me; he is a Christian studying for the ministry, a man who has often gone with Dr. Lehman on similar expeditions. Beside Nzhia I took Bitum and the donkey. So we walked along single file, the head of the caravan first, in a short skirt and woolen putties. After me came Nzhia carrying an umbrella and a lantern, wearing a black felt hat, a white singlet and a cloth; and looking the nice decent man that he is. Then came Bitum, his loins girt with a cloth, and his burden of my food and bedding strapped to his back. This pack projected above his head a foot or so, and gave him the true carrier air of being topheavy. The donkey had no burden at all; he was designed to carry me, but he cunningly intimated that were I in any sort of rush I had best walk. So he ambled along with that air of covert mischief which makes a donkey no fit comrade on a serious errand.

Thus we progressed until we passed through a town where we were joined by a little boy whose name is Maya. I taught him to read,

and we are of course rather intimate. I allowed him to come with us, and afterwards I was glad, for he was so kind to me. He is a small, small boy in a ragged singlet and a dreary cloth, but he is a born protector; he followed at my heels and guessed what I was thinking about. When I walked logs he walked behind me, and I felt the moth-like touch of his little hands to right and left of me. After something less than two hours we left the government road for a beautiful forest path, open yet shaded. The bogs bothered us because of the donkey. Sometimes Nzhia carried me on his back. Nature had given Maya the heart, but not the body for this act of devotion. It was raining when we came to the town of Moga, where I stopped and spoke in the palaver house to some thirty people, mostly men. While I was speaking there came in by chance a dwarf named Bé, a headman of the dwarfs visited by Dr. Halsey. He seemed glad to show us the way, and presently we started off again in the gray drizzle. When we struck into the bush Bé led the caravan. I walked after him and could see the path after he showed it. The wet leaves brushed my face; all the forest was full of a perfect green light; some flowers there were here, but not many, — rather all the forest dress was green except where little

streams ran brown. Thus we walked for three quarters of an hour, when Bé went ahead to tell the people of his village that a woman of the "Minisi" was coming. At noon, after a walk of four hours, I stepped into the little clearing where the dwarf shelters lay. I sat down in the first shelter beside a little shriveled woman who shrank away. I did not speak to her, more than to greet her, but looked about me. The settlement lay on the side of a hill and took the form of a rectangle with one side open. There were no houses, properly speaking, but four shelters made of roofs of leaves. The eaves sloped from a roof-tree about five feet high. One was carried to the ground; the other, at a more open angle, stopped short of the ground some four feet. This was your house. It is easiest to enter such a shelter from the open ends. This much I saw while I sat beside the woman. Presently one little man after another came from somewhere and shook hands with me pleasantly enough, until quite a company were squatting in front of the shelter watching me breathe. The women hung back. I could see them watching from under cover. I think that there must have been twenty adults about the settlement within fifteen minutes of my arrival. The smallest woman did not pass my shoulder; and most of

them were smaller than I,[1] — none larger. Most of the men were about my size; some larger by half a head, some smaller by as much. One knows them for dwarfs not so much by their size as by some indefinable expression of face, — something at the same time dreary and cunning. Their eyes are singularly unsmiling.

They prepared a shelter for me, a little one with two beds, — the heads under the ridge-pole and the feet crowded under the eaves. These beds are stationary, elevated about eight inches from the ground, and are made of poles an inch in diameter, laid close together in parallel rows. Those in my shelter were shorter than myself by a foot. Between the beds was the log fire, and I was glad of it, for I was wet through. Bé brought me a bunch of green plantains, and on top — as Solomon must have showered benefits upon the Queen of Sheba — he laid a bit of dried meat, the head and forequarters of a little animal (a monkey), its expression all resistance and its small meager paws holding indefatigably to nothing. Poor little beast — a long time dead and still that miser grasp! Bitum and Nzhia ate the offering. I ate some peanuts cooked in a leaf, and something out of a tin. This was, of course, very edifying to the populace, who might

[1] Five feet three.

see me from all three sides of the open hut. Still it rained; the people made off to their shelters, and those who lived in the neighboring settlements disappeared. Presently the normal life of the village was resumed. From where I rested on my bed I watched it. There was a woman who made a net; truly she was like a candle in that dark world; my eyes came back to her again and again. There were four beds in each hut and two fires. Those women who were not cooking over the fires lay on the beds, as did the men. Over the cross-pole, which is elevated at the head of the bed and is the pillow, peered their faces; and they looked fixedly at me, or far off into the gray rain. When I was rested, I sat in the other huts with the women. They could not speak Bulu and they suffered, I suppose, from dumb alarms. They distrusted me. I walked to another settlement, the one where Dr. Halsey stayed, and saw other such people, most of whom had come to see me when I arrived. I thought: This is the primeval slime at the bottom of the sea of life; somewhere up above me, where the sun shines through the clear water, are those I love. I know that there are times and seasons — and aspects; but so the dwarfs appeared on one rainy day, to one missionary who is a woman.

At five o'clock, the rain having ceased, I held a meeting with fifteen adults and some children; most of the audience were men. I spoke in Bulu and Nzhia interpreted in Ngumba. The dwarfs listened attentively; they listened with a certain amount of enthusiasm, — not, you would say, a hunger and thirst, but a pleased sort of acquiescence in the argument, — a complacent agreement as to the desperate wickedness of the natural man, and with no balking as to their own wickedness in particular. I fancied that there was a perceptible deposit left in their minds from what they must have heard at other times. Altogether there was everything in the meeting to encourage an orator, and not very much to encourage a missionary. It was dark when I stopped talking and went to bed. I did not sleep at all — how might I? The dwarfs drank some and Nzhia scolded them. Presently they went to sleep and the beautiful, awful night filled the little cup of the clearing with moonlight. Where the hills sloped I could see the white sky through the trees. All the little airs that moved were chill and sweet. From time to time a dwarf would mend his fire, and the embers would flare up and then die down to a steady glow. All slept until the morning was on us full and golden. I ate and paid my debts: a

box of matches and a brass ring to Bé, and a ring to Bé's old mother because she was his mother. I put this on her finger and had a perverse whimsical recollection of the marriage of Ariadne and Bacchus in the Doge's palace. There was still a woman unpaid — she who brought the water — and she could not be induced to come out from under the eaves of her shelter. I ducked under and sat down beside her. She snatched the ring out of my hand and drew away, for all the world like a monkey. She never gave me so much as a glance. After this we had a meeting with those who lived in the village. Then we went away into the morning and the radiant forest, which takes no account of the evil doings of man. The green light was shot with the sharp glitter of wet leaves and shattered with spears of sunlight. The walk home was all beauty. Did you ever read "The Story Without an End"? The forest was like that. It gleamed and flashed with color.

June 21.

I have a little girl now and she is the cunningest kitten — pretty, too. When I first came to Lolo I taught her the alphabet; but, dear me, she has forgotten that long ago. She is the despair of her teachers, but she is really a neat,

sweet little thing to have about one. I think she must be about ten years old — hardly eleven. Her name is Makako. Long ago she made up her mind to be my little handmaid; I suspect that she is pretty stubborn; anyway, she achieved her end. She firmly refused to serve Mrs. Lehman, she refused Mrs. Johnston, and all the countryside: — "Makako very much fears," meaning that she was shy. But all the time Makako was making sheep's eyes at me, and sidling up to me on Sundays and on week days to murmur, in her miserable Bulu, "I want to work for you." One day she arrived with her mother, who is a Christian woman, and she muttered her usual plea. Dear, but she was cunning with her little old cloth tied over her little flat chest, and her big eyes pleading at me out of her kitten face. So I said yes, that she might come on Monday — this was a Saturday; but Makako took root in her chair; she would stay now. I looked at her severely — "You are such a 'shy' little girl that you will cry, and bother me." Makako looked sheepish. Well, she never cried. She remembers all the nests into which I put my belongings. Her first question about an object is, "Where shall we put it?" and there she keeps it very well. I have insisted that she spend Sundays with her

LITTLE BULU BOYS AND GIRLS

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mother, so on Sunday she visits me. Last Sunday she came in and she cast a critical eye over my room. "Where is the dust-cloth?" asked little Makako, and set to work to dust.

July 4.

Our executive officer — I mean the lieutenant — has gone into the Njem country, where there is a revolt. The Njem are a very large tribe. Another tribe called the Makaé are revolting with them. Once every year for the last three years the Njem have killed and eaten a white trader. This year another trader was caught by them. On the evening of the day when they meant to kill him, he was bought for two women — I mean, two women were paid for him — by a headman who wished to befriend him. He came to this station on his way to the coast, with his wrists bound up. He had tried, when he saw no hope of escape, to open, with a fork, the veins in his wrists.

July 16.

Makako has made a dress. It is a bright blue trade cloth, with a white figure — a pattern of her own choosing. All the last week she has sewed and sewed and sewed; in the evenings, the little black head bent over her work, she

has sewed and sewed and sewed. The dress is just a little chemise with bits of sleeves. Yesterday she finished it and put it on — her first dress! I took her to the glass, but at sight of that brilliant image and her nakedness so elaborately covered, she hung her head and suffered who shall say what pangs of delicious embarrassment. Cleopatra, I suppose, when they unrolled her from the rug in the presence of Cæsar, hung her head, too. At least she should have.

July 17.

More about Makako's dress. She went down to the river to-day when she had been forbidden. I went down the path after her; and presently I could see, on a tree-trunk hanging low and long over the water, a red dress and a blue dress. The red dress was fishing, and you would have thought, had I a heart in my bosom, or a memory, I would have slunk off in the thick green about the path. But missionaries always do their duty and I kept straight on the narrow path. When the blue dress saw me coming, it just rolled off the log into the river. Poor little blue dress! Presently Makako preceded me up the path with the blue dress wrung out and coiled on her head, her little brown girl body all wet, and fear knocking at her heart because

her mistress did not speak any word, either good or evil.

August 3.

There are now eight little girls on the place — three of them house-servants and the other five school-children. The eight train together a good part of the time; and you might see them now if you were to look from my window, busy about their evening meal. They have as yet no house, and cook in the open. I have pitched my tent for their foregatherings, and the fire is near by. Such chatterings! I like them. It is pretty to see eight little brown girls in swimming, and to see one of them on the bank all wet, fishing with her left hand and taking the correct Venus pose with her right. This pose is unfailing in every case of absolute nakedness. Well, after they come dripping out of the water, and put on their cloths with no wiping at all, they take to cutting the weeds and grass; or if it is Wednesday or Thursday they sew with Mrs. Johnston.

When they work out of doors I oversee them. At five-thirty work is done — then more cooking, with the soft night closing in till the little girls appear and disappear in the wavering firelight. They are boisterous in the evening, which

disturbs me because I fear it will disturb every one else. The other night I went into their cabin to see what they were about. The eight of them were drinking water, each a quart can full, but with such horse play, my dears, and their little stomachs bulging visibly. Then they measured waists. This was funny to see by the light of their two fires. Presently they sat down and listened to Makako, who must be a sly humorist, for her most sober aspect arouses mirth. She talks to her friends in Ngumba, so I miss her little personality.

The most charming sight is to see Makako run, — such unbelievable grace! To see her run through high grass, leaping, her head up, her little arms outspread, the blue of her dress blowing back from her straight body is a sight so beautiful and joyous, so full of young animal life, that one's head fills with lovely images and similes. All her little gestures are perfect. Once she passed me in the path on her even, light run; and I looked to see her pass a man who came toward us, but when she met him she stopped — with no preliminary slackening of speed — and gave him her hand — her arm outstretched at length. This sudden pause and the little free gesture were beautiful in poise — one felt her even, happy breathing.

August 4.

Outside under the stars the little girls eat their supper of boiled plantain. The donkey comes nosing at their backs as they sit about the fire and they shriek their clamorous alarms — which are not fictitious. Presently they sing softly intricate little chants, very charming, indeed; one of them stands up in the firelight and moves to the sound of their voices and the sudden accurate clap of their hands; her movements are slight and monotonous, not at all obvious in meaning. Asks your child, "What do the words mean in Bulu?" for the little girls sing in Ngumba, — and she is told that their import is: "Who would wish to marry an old man?"

August 7.

One gets so balled up with these people.

> "I have eaten your bread and salt,
> I have drunk your water and wine,
> The deaths you died I have watched beside
> And the lives that you lived were mine."

The deaths we die are mostly marriage palavers, — we have on hand at present three most harrowing marriage palavers. Polygamy is terrible. I had so open a mind about it when I came to Africa — and now I have so many sad thoughts of it.

Makako is the subject of one; her father wishes to buy another wife with her, and Makako's poor mother feels the thrust of a two-edged sword. She told me about her troubles to-day with great bitterness. I looked at her with all the pity of my heart, seeing which she laughed and scratched the ground with her toes. Her laugh was sad — not merry at all, my dears. She explained to me that if they took Makako on that palaver she would just die — but none of her race die so.

August 10.

Last night being a moonlight night — nothing vehement about the moon, however, but a discreet filtering through clouds, and that there was need for discretion you will agree — all the girls took off their outer clothes and made little trunks of their loin-cloths. So attired they began a series of games, so amusing, my dears, so wild, so young and animal, that you would have laughed from your souls to see their nimble antics, all under the gray moonlight, and with no sound but the soft, measured sound of the chant proper to the game and the pad of their feet. Imagine my surprise to find them playing a catching game, in which the captive was drawn aside by two rivals, who

addressed her thus: "Which do you choose, dresses like the white person, or real food?" "Food," said greedy little Makako. Now, if this was not "London Bridge," and it had all the marks, I want to know. Yet they said that their mothers played so, before them. Many other games they played, some delicious imitations of animals.

Every one thinks Makako so naughty, and naughty she certainly is, with explosions of vehement, windy wrath—fishwife frenzy: only among her equals, of course. But all the time under her soft little child bosom beats her little wild heart with its rebellions and its fears, its little evil passions and its little hurry of gayety. She knows I love her, and so sometimes she droops to me a little tamed and meek. She does not steal, but she very subtly lies about her motives and especially about any undesirable knowledge. There is a little girl in Makako's mother's house, a new wife for her father, but Makako has never so much as heard of that little girl. For her she simply does not exist. Now, every one thinks this very naughty of Makako, who cannot possibly ignore the child's existence, but I think it rather superb, a triumph of spirit over matter, quite in the manner of Mrs. Eddy.

September 18.

I continue to teach the chart classes; not now letters alone, but numbers and writing, which is pathetic and incredible, as are many of our African uses. There is a small boy of a mournful cynicism who entered school something less than two months ago. He writes as well as I do and will excel me when he dares.

When we instituted the girls' boarding school, Mrs. Lehman and Mrs. Johnston said that they would teach the girls to wash and sew if I would teach them morals. And I thought that if I could teach them writing, I could teach them morals, so it was agreed. Because morals require supervision at all hours their house was built outside my window, a cabin eight by fourteen, with a shock of leaf-thatch over log walls; these covered with plantain leaves to keep the wind and the rain out of the cracks. The little house is all brown and silver in its tattered dress of dried leaves. Inside there are four beds made of poles laid in close rows; on the floor burn two wood fires, for cooking by day, for warmth by night. There are no windows. The firelight shines through the open door and the smoke wavers above the whole surface of the roof. Some of our little pupils are house-servants, some are girls who must do field work for their

food and tuition. On the days in the week when they were not engaged in the afternoon with such fancy accomplishments as Mrs. Lehman and Mrs. Johnston taught them, it fell to me, the Department of Morals, to see that they earned their salt. This they did with cutlasses and hoes and rakes, cutting down the indefatigable high grasses that possess African clearings.

Here is an account of their day: Six-thirty, prayers with the assembled school, the workmen and the neighbors; after school any ambitious little girl may work for an hour to her own credit at the rate of two cents an hour — twelve hours of such work to buy a slate (and a pencil to boot), three hours' work to buy a lead pencil, thirty hours to buy a song-book. You can see them in the mists of the morning, their bits of cloths not keeping their little brown bodies dry, swinging their cutlasses and cutting their way to some such academic possession. At eight-thirty, school in the church with the boys; at eleven-thirty, the division of food; then clamor and rest until two. During this period they bathe in the river; they are really very clean little girls. From two until five-thirty, work in the fields or sewing — for this is none of your charity schools, but self-supporting and in line with mission policy. In the evening a great

noise of chatter floats out from the little house with the smoke of their fires. They cook and eat; sometimes they quarrel about their food. Angambe, looking up from some such supreme occupation, sees the moralist in a white dress, and cries out at the ghost. Moralists are, it would seem, less of this world than of some other. Now, if I will sit down with them, they will really talk to me, or sing their curious charming little chants that are wonderfully accurate and difficult. Perhaps I bring in the lantern, and by its light on the earth floor they sew patches or cut pictures with scissors sent by her friends to the moralist. This is all very happy, very free. The little girls are gay and noisy until nine o'clock, when there are prayers again, and the door is locked.

Very happy were the little girls and free for several weeks. Then we fell under the curse of the marriage palaver. One girl, a house-servant, was sold to a man owning several wives. When it came to delivery of the goods, the goods became animated in dissent — not, indeed, that consent had been asked of the goods. The station backed the girl. News of the defiance of good Ngumba custom penetrated to the ends of the earth and woke a thousand anxieties. The social fabric was imperiled. Two of the little school-

girls were led away weeping by canny male relatives. This was sad to see. My own little servant Makako was ordered to her town by her uncle, her father being off in Bulu where he is hunting goods with which to buy a new wife upon whose purchase he means to give Makako in part payment. There you see the exit of the three little injuns. The school is depleted and in ill repute.

Putting up overnight at Ipose, where one of the children lives, I heard from her that the townspeople say of the school, "No little girl may marry who enters there." You are reminded, doubtless, of the legend over the gate of Dante's Hell. My single state is a matter of common marvel. It does not help us in our present difficulty, and may be taken as evidence of a cult from which young Ngumba maidenhood must be protected.

Mfun, the little girl in question, had her slate as token of her having drunk at the wells of learning. It hung in her hut, as a diploma hangs in a doctor's office, witnessing to her poor little achievements. She slept in my hut and did me some service. I paid my debt with a needle and some thread. When next I go I shall take her some patches. Patches are dear to little African girls; poor Amana, when she was taken away,

went down the path wiping her eyes on her bits of patchwork.

We were sad when these children were taken away. Any work for girls in a polygamous country is sad. Other girls will come; some, whose parents are Christians, or otherwise enlightened, we shall be able to keep. And some will go, yet not without benefit. Something they will have learned of reading and writing, of sewing and washing, of truth and of the love of God. The night before Mfun left, when I asked the children for what they would wish me to pray, she said, "Tell Him that I am afraid of getting married." It is a comfort to know that our High Priest was touched by the feeling of that piteous little infirmity.

Part Two

THE MAIL FROM THE NEW CLEARING

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THE MAIL FROM THE NEW CLEARING

Lolodorf, October 2, 1905.

Lolodorf Station is to move four miles to the west; this will bring us nearer home, but there are other primary objects to be served by the move. The present site is unwholesome and too small. It is impossible either to feed or to employ our schoolboys on our limited ground.

We have bought two hundred and fifty acres of land, comprising three villages, some gardens, and a tract of forest. The villages show a handful of huts, the gardens are clusters of plantains shaking out their banners in little clearings, but we own a world of forest.

On Saturday of last week the headmen came to be paid. They had served us to all sorts of African dalliance and we thought that the payment, in trade goods, was to be of a piece with the bargaining; but not so. When the three headmen arrived, followed by their henchmen and women, they played an unexpected part. In less than an hour, and with no more palaver than you might hear over the purchase of a

basket of food, they were paid. We think that they were dazed by their opportunity, as small boys might be who were invited (oh, I know how fantastic my simile!) to eat their way out of a candy shop. Certainly they had a tranced air. When I came out to see the play, thinking it to have just begun, they were making ready to leave in a kind of cautious silence, — a comparative silence, be it understood, — and in very much the spirit of a missionary who is dreaming of home and fears to wake.

The headmen were in full dress. Two wore hats that were uncommonly grand, still being cased in those cylinders of pasteboard in which they had been packed; two wore green broadcloth coats, — by the epaulets the uniform of some regiment and not originally intended for our friends, one of whom was too small for his coat, the other not small enough. They listened abstractedly to Dr. Lehman's caution that they were not to buy rum with their gains. They were in a hurry to be off, and presently they started, they and their wives and their friends, all laden with their goods. As a spectacle it was imposing, and of a kind to draw a head out of the door of every hut by the way. There were nests of zinc buckets, of iron pots, piles of hats, — perfect towers of hats, — sheaves of umbrellas and of cutlasses; there

were tin trunks of a splendor unknown to you provincials, but familiar to us of the West Coast, — very gay, preferably green, with a lavish belt of red and no scrimping of gilt. In the trunks were yards and yards of trade cloth, bars of soap, pocket-knives, padlocks, matches, and many other cherishable articles that will change hands in numberless marriage palavers. With some such glitter of spoil must Tamerlane have returned from conquest.

Yesterday was Sunday, and I went down the government road, speaking in the towns as I went. I passed our new land and the town where the goods were held for distribution. Such clamor and hum, such bustlings about of people clad in the magnificence afforded by our store, such declamations from a headman who was talking the distribution palaver and emphasizing his eloquence with his staff, — such an aspect altogether of a village fair filled with sunshine! Nor was my passing without honor — "The woman of the Minisi!" — and down the street came the dressy community. "Come and tell us the Word of God!" was the cry, for there was abroad a spirit of indulgence, to each his prerogative. But my instinct was the other way. "Not to-day; you are too noisy. How am I to know but that you have been drinking rum?"

Drinking rum! What gross accusation was this? Why did the white woman hate to speak in the palaver house? For the sake of peace I ducked into a house and spoke to some women. Outside all the eager tumult of tongues, the passionate voices of covetousness filled the bright air; but in the dark hut were women at the primeval occupation of grinding food, and not unwilling to listen to the white woman who was of so optimistic a mind about the uncertain dreadful future. Presently I went on, but with eyes and ears full of the animation of the little town.

Sometimes of a Friday I go to a town twelve miles from here. Half the way is by open road and the last happy half through the forest. It is lovely to go to Ipose; they do so much want a Minisi there. I am espied climbing the hill afar off, for this cluster of villages lies in a beautiful hill country. They rejoice at my coming. An ivory horn announces me, quite as Elsa is announced in the first act of "Lohengrin." The hut where I put up is opened, and before I can make a cup of tea there are delegations from the country all about. This will be four o'clock in the afternoon. At five we have a service, and again at half-past seven of the next morning. There will be an audience of, say, fifty people, minded to know of the high things of God.

Every other week Benzhuli, the young elder, preaches to the people of Ipose; they say that his audiences are very large.

A year ago Africa as a spectacle was tremendously interesting: I saw continually the forests and the rivers, the interminable, melancholy file of carriers, the curiously tempered light, the curiously modified color. But more and more a missionary comes to have to do with individuals. His labor and his problems are with these. Mr. Nevinson, in the August "Harper's," very truly says that the African is not known to the white man. He is not. I have hardly a fixed conviction or an inference as fruit of this year's observation, but the missionary comes to feel that the African is known to God. He feels himself to be — he knows himself to be — one in an affair of three, and God is the third. And he knows himself to be necessary to that union. He is the friend of the Bridegroom.

October 5.

There are ever so many bugs about to-night, and they make it hard to write. They are bugs that undress and leave their clothes on the floor, all the little wings of them lying on the floor. Yesterday we closed school because there is smallpox in the neighborhood. We vaccinated

all the schoolboys and they thought it a tremendous treat. I washed their arms, Dr. Johnston scratched them, and Mrs. Johnston applied the virus, while the patient kept the face of pleasure and of pain which suggests the photographer.

October 6.

Two hundred and forty people were vaccinated by this white hand to-day — or to this many vaccinations did I apply the virus. It was a hurry-up job, I can tell you, with no pleasant stream of anecdotes to soothe the patients' pain. We operated in the church, doing as many as we could and turning the rest away when the virus ran out. Things are beautifully quiet. I am resting like a cat. Don't worry about the smallpox; there have been no more than seven or eight cases, none on the place. Just be glad that I have a month's complete rest from school.

November 4.

Bitum came in early in the evening with half his supper in his cheek, — and might not he go to a dance across the river? Go and ask the minister, said I. Mr. Heminger said that he might go, and explained to me that it was to be

a "one-man dance," with the air of assuring me of its innocence. And now I must sit up till Bitum comes in from his one-man dance — or go to bed alone in the house, for the Lehmans are away at Elat. This minute he is back, and when I asked, Did the man dance well? I hear that he did, he certainly did dance a dance all unlike other men's dancing! — and Bitum chuckles reminiscently. The ballet, it would seem, had some features, not common and all new — as our Lady's Tumbler claimed for his tumbling. I have just been reading "My Lady's Tumbler," and I think it is so lovely. The passion of the man in his poor short-winded speeches!

November 7.

There are some occupations which appeal irresistibly to the imagination. Now, I can't understand an indifference to cobbling. Don't suppose that this attraction dates from that mid-summer evening when Hans Sachs cobbled in the dusk by the light of his crystal. Just common cobblers in their little caves are awesome, and seem to have the wisdom of certain old women who have both lived and thought. Surely you must have noticed that cobblers are very nice. I think of this because to-day I

cobbled my shoes. There is certainly something in it; for I had pleasant thoughts of more than common matters, and while the shoes are no better than they need be, the mood was a real cobbler's mood. A trader at Kribi sent me up a pair of boots procured from no one knows where, but the fruit of untiring research on his part. Archæological research, you would say, if you could see them; and I can't get away from an image of me writhing my way down the path to the beach. The toes induce this image. One understands the foolish virgins better, in Africa, — sometimes we run out of oil ourselves.

I am enjoying a few days of quiet leisure. All day I have the house to myself and at night one of the boys sleeps in the middle room. I must tell you about Bitum. With his earnings he has bought a goat and a kid; it is the goat that *will* go over to the trader's clearing and plague him. For a long time Bitum has begged to buy a goat; and at last, because of his importunity, — the goat's importunity, — Bitum was allowed to buy these. At this least convenient time I had to let him go to his town with his property, for it was evident that the goats must be got off the place. There was a man from Bitum's town here for a day or two; when we asked might n't

he take the goats, we heard that no! the man was leaving on Sunday, — and that none of Bitum's cattle might walk on Sunday. So at midnight last night, when Sunday, worn with virtue, collapsed into Monday's lap, Bitum set out in the moonlight with the goat so recently reclaimed from heathenism and with the innocent kid.

February 8, 1906.

We have one hundred and fifty pupils in school. Mr. Hummel talks school morning, noon, and night; and I dream school or wake to hear the schoolgirls sniffling with colds or crying over their vaccinations; and at the ringing of the morning bell I hang out of my window to see that all go to prayers. Thus are infant civilizations fostered and nurtured — this is a real word I am telling you — without blood and tears there is no evolution of man. Here is Abesola in a new cloth, the first real cloth ever I saw him wear; 't is the beautiful fruit of his labors; for this cloth he dug long in the earth and cut weeds of misty mornings. A white cloth with a pale-blue flower, — covering Abesola from his waist to his heels. Abesola casts down his eyes and smirks and I know how he feels, for I have pretty clothes of my own.

February 20.

Now every day is like the last, — though to say so is to take no account of the day the trader came to lunch. It was like this: Every one had gone to the new site but myself, so I ordered lunch to please me — I ordered noodles, if you want to know. I was sitting down to eat, with a book to read between courses, when down the path came a white man — all booted and spurred. He had come, he said, to say good-bye. So we said good-bye; and, "Who shall I say called?" asked I, quite glibly, — and this was a wrong thing to say because Herr K. had been at the house before. So we parted somewhat coldly. Only the dog would not follow him, — his dog that had crept under the Morris-chair. Really I had not seen the dog before the trader was halfway down the path, and then I saw, too, that there was a storm brewing. I suppose the dog guessed as much; at all events he sat down hard; and I pitied him when I looked at the sky. I was like Hugh Miller — "I couldna drown the wee doggie." So I called the trader back and we lunched off the noodles. For all the terrific sky, it did not rain at all, and that provoked me. I heard lots of colonial gossip, — and that many men are fools. Herr K—— explained that —— is to be recalled for an affront offered

to himself; and nothing would have prevented much violent narrative but that I smiled. It was mean, — but consider my helpless circumstance, — with Mr. K. flourishing his fork and calling down imprecations on the head of ——; who, for all I knew, was leaning over the embattlements on the hill with an ear single to the honor of his name. So when I caught Mr. K.'s eye, I just smiled a very little and he came back to our noodles. I hate to remember the dog who begged to stay — for no express reason. We had to tie a rope about his neck before he would follow his master, who was much embarrassed by this defection and could not imagine what had come over the beast.

February 21.

I live in such a continual clamor, my dears. I make it my business not to mind the noise, except when it comes from the girls' quarters, when everybody objects to it. But it does make some sort of impression, as I discovered to-day. I went to hold a meeting in a village upon the crown of a hill, and when I got there the cupboard was bare, — all the inhabitants had gone into the brush to escape the soldiers, who are after carriers. Up and down the street I walked peering into the empty houses. Only three

women were to be found, and as few schoolboys. We went into the little palaver house upon the brink of the hill. We sang a few songs, and then I asked, Did any one have a question which he would like to ask, — for, of course, I can answer any question that can be evolved. So I sat still while they thought, and they sat still, too, embarrassed by their unusual occupation. Then, my dear, into that little palaver house, open every way to the afternoon, there flowed the quiet of the deserted town, of the green forest, of the blue hills, — the kind quiet of the unpopulated earth. I could have wept for gratitude. This may seem a little thing to you, just as leisure may seem a mild form of excitement, but it was as good as gold or spring water to me.

Many things are changing here. There is first the road, very unlike the road as I first knew it, and now the government hill. For days the long cry of a live tree as it falls, until now the hill is as bare as your hand. Almost no bush towns are left, for all have been called out to build upon the road, so there is an end of afternoons in the little ways of the forest. Soon the telephone will be established between here and Kribi — then, automobiles. This is bad, as the fish thinks when he is pulled out of the essential element. But there are always the

people, living their mysterious lives under one's eye. There is life with its unstaled, infinite variety. Courtesy is a wonderful screen, is n't it? These people sit continually behind it. There is hardly a town within a mile but I have a friend there, who is glad of my coming; ready to lie to me, of course, and afraid of me, but glad and friendly. The names they call me, my dears, because I don't allow them to call me "Mamma," which is the common form of address — Matchenzie, Tchensie, and Mr. Matchenzie!

February 22.

There was a dwarf in my girls' school for a few days, and for all she was no more than forty-eight inches high, she was a woman. All morning she sat learning her letters and making little marks on her slate, which she thought was writing. And in the afternoon she worked with the little girls to earn her food. She was just about as big as the rest of them, but she could do more work, — cut more firewood and mow more grass. Because she is a dwarf they think in her town that she must work harder than anybody else. That is the way they think about dwarfs. Her husband bought her long ago from her people, in the close, leafy places of the

forest, where her mother still lives, — a little, little old woman, I suppose, with a bit of a cloth about her middle, always cooking food in a kettle over a fire on the floor of her leaf shelter. Well, now here was her bit of a daughter learning her letters like any other lucky African, and learning other things besides. She was learning about God, which was a good deal. At least we could hope that if she were to stay a year, she would be quite another sort of a little dwarf. But to-day one of her husband's other wives came to take her away and she had to go. I put a needle through a card and wrapped some thread around it; then I gave her an aluminum thimble; and she was so pleased with so many possessions of so many kinds that she was not too sad when she went away. But I was.

March 20.

Here is an account of to-day. At eight o'clock I started down to the new site, meaning to visit along the way. Half a mile from the station the doctor overtook me and said, would n't I like to see the pest-house. Here the road passes a plantain garden, a little path takes one downhill to a ravine; in this ravine are four or five shelters and the patients live in these. This is in the forest; the garden is left behind. From

beyond the settlement comes the sound of a stream. I stand fifty feet from the first patients, who are now able to come out, and presently there is a line of fifteen or so in a row, — men, women, and children, all with their eyes fixed upon the doctor, all talking with their eyes, poor things, all explaining with their eyes that while they once had smallpox, true, in the past, why, now they are quite well, and asking with their eyes, may n't they go home? For to-day, as they know very well, some of them are to be discharged. So there stood the brown line of them making dumb appeals. One after the other was examined by the doctor. "You go back into the house. You go to the stream and bathe"; and this last voice was the voice of an angel, for the man who bathed in the stream would be anointed and freshly clad in a new cloth from the hand of the governor, and sent on his way. There was a great silly fellow from Yaunde, and he contended loudly that he was well. Not availing, then he moaned, rocking his body and crying, "I must go home, mother is crying for me." The size of him and the childish wail of him were funny.

From the pest-house I went on down the road. I passed a big caravan of Bulu, resting in the shade. One who lay upon his stomach in

the middle of the road was emitting an even, steady harangue. All I could get of it was the word "kettle." "Is it a kettle palaver?" I asked; and it was. There never was a caravan but had a kettle palaver. There will be, say, four men to one kettle, and the combinations of imposition, insult, injury which can be inflicted by this company of four among themselves, with the kettle for implement, pass the feeble imaginings of the white man. The pathos of starvation, the cry of the burden-bearer, the outraged rights of man, the unjust division of labor, — all these voices and others as tragic wail in the kettle palaver. This I explained, in a fashion, of course, to the caravan resting in the shade, and the accuser fell to eating where he lay on his stomach in the road. Very well he knew that his palaver was lost, for the company heard the word of the white woman and laughed.

So I came to the new site where the naked ribs of our house bleach in the sun. Poor Mr. Hummel turns from his sun-struck labors to speak to me. Nkulu, his cook, greets me with a joy that passes reason. I am impressed and stop to wonder, and I remember that we are to have meat for dinner — we killed a goat last night and all the house-servants beam. I find

the work-people's town where the women are filling the kettles with plantains, and under shelter of a roof of leaves still green, I lie down upon a bed of split logs still odorous of the forest. The floor of the shelter is still untrodden, the broken brown earth is still clean, through the open sides of the hut I see the forest in the haze of midday. By and by I have lunch with Mr. Hummel, who is glad to talk. Nkulu serves the meal in a trance of bliss, — I eat even less meat than he had hoped.

April 1.

The other day I was sitting in a hut on a bed, my elbows on my knees and my chin on my hands. A woman lay on the bed back of me; she was sick because her husband had beaten her. Suddenly she sat up and began to feel up and down my back with her hand, making out to her satisfaction that my anatomy resembled her own; dear knows how long she had wondered, and all her townspeople too. Presently I felt her hand on my head — stroking my hair, which I wear now tied at my neck, that the little bunch of it and the ribbon may cover the nape from the sun. Then said she, in a voice very tender and caressing, "*Why* won't you wear your hair as we do?" "Because I should have to cut

some of it off." "And why do you hate to do that?" — still stroking my head. "Because my father would ask, 'What did they do to my child in the country beyond the sea — that they cut off her hair?'" She laughed at this.

But I was touched by this wish of hers that I should be like herself, and I knew by the feel of her hand on my head that she loved me. All the time of late I am hunting a way to tell you that things have changed for me, in a kind and degree which matter a great deal, but which cannot be handed out in order. I have at last, in a measure, the passion of what I am doing. I never expected this. I feel like the mother of all these poor women.

April 7.

To-day I was in Manjuer Bian's house. Manjuer is a little woman, a Christian, who dresses like a man, — wears a man's jacket on dress occasions, — and who is comfortably rank of the soil. Often I meet her coming from her garden, her basket on her back full of roots and herbs, herself like some little brown root dug out of the ground. All her fingers are worn down; one forefinger is quite gone. This is not so repulsive as it sounds, only perplexing sometimes when I am in duty bound — in following a narra-

tive of her recounting — to call off the number indicated by her fingers. "I have borne children — ugh!" says Manjuer Bian, holding up some fingers; and I must of course call the number, and not waste time either. "Ugh" is the call to arithmetic. The question is whether or not to count in the missing forefinger. You know how one wonders about a cross-eyed person, — as to whether one is addressed or another. Well, I was in her house to-day and there were other people, — the old blind woman and a headman (in a small way) who has lost one eye, but who looked at me with humor and kindness out of the other.

"Is it a real word," said he, "that you are unmarried?" "A real word, indeed," said I. Whereat he laughed — irrepressibly and indulgently.

"I can arrange a marriage for you," said he.

"That's exactly where you are mistaken," said I, "you cannot!"

"Don't bother the child," said Manjuer Bian, who was securing her cloth about her waist and did not look up; more said she in Ngumba, of which I understood the word "little."

"She says," said the headman, when I asked him, "that you are just a little girl."

"Manjuer Bian," said I seriously, "don't you

know that I am a real woman? — as old as Mamma Lehman? I am grown a long time, Manjuer Bian!"

Manjuer smiled very kindly, very discreetly; she sat on a little stool and fell to grinding seed on a large flat stone, her legs spread out on either side. Presently she looked up, still smiling. "*Yes*, Matchenda, of course, you are a grown woman!" said she, exactly as one answers a little girl.

April 12.

I wish you might just once see a caravan of young girls — Bene and Yaunde. You never saw the poignant charm of youth more perfectly expressed. I suppose that pang which is associated with our appreciation of the charm of youth — and which is not all pleasure — is a sort of nostalgia. And then, one has, about little carrier girls, other pangs of a more obvious nature. They are so timid, such pitiful little timidities. Yesterday I passed one who had turned aside to give me way. I stopped very close to her and said something friendly; but at my stopping and at sound of my voice she froze into a perfectly immobile terror; not a muscle moved under her smooth skin; she did not so much as wink; all her bones melted within her, I sup-

pose; and like a little forest creature that has no apparatus of defense, she trusted desperately and without reason to passivity. I have seen this extreme terror before and no compassion avails with it. So I did the only kind thing, which was to pass on. There was another little girl in the caravan. I walked awhile behind her, and it was sweet to see that little buoyant body tread the earth. Her little bustle of leaves was fresh and green, gathered from a sweet-scented plant; it beat about her pretty thighs as she walked. Presently she turned her little merry face, and I made some kind of sign that I was an amiable, quite human person; at which she laughed and exclaimed in her adorable treble — chattering to her friends ahead — that the white woman had done thus and so. This caravan came from no very great distance with roof-mats for the governor; they were, I judged, all the available people from one neighborhood, and they had more than commonly the innocent aspect of country folk.

April 24.

On Sunday I went to Masokna — about two miles from here — trailed by certain friends, and we had a meeting. Yesterday I went to Wongali, which town is still in a turmoil over

the distribution of the women left by the headman who died in December. This distribution took place two weeks ago and was a sort of minor judgment, — the sheep and the goats quite naturally dividing themselves. You can't believe every black man who claims to be a Christian, but when you see a black man refusing an inheritance for conscience' sake you can give him some confidence. Two men who knew better took the women who fell to them, — Ngoe and Ndongo did not. Poor Ndongo — so like our comic-paper negroes, so like the negro of the minstrel show, flapping his long shoes ahead of his progress; the size of his lips somehow discounting the width of the brim of his hat, — and yet, a man so honestly good that one comes to recognize him afar off — so easily recognizable, poor Ndongo — with joy. He stood out against the subtlest form of temptation to which the black man may be subjected; a co-heir with himself — a young fellow of his own age — came off with an establishment of four women, which is a pretty fair start; he may achieve greatness.

All my progress in these last days is attended with lamentations; there is a perpetual chorus on the part of our neighbors — who will not be comforted. You would think that we were going into a far country, — that "the flowers of the

forest were a' weed awa'." Poor Mrs. Lehman hates to leave this house where she has lived since she was married. Quarantine was declared off to-day.

I am so sleepy, my dears, that there is nothing else for it. Hear the conversation at the door, between Mrs. Lehman and a carrier — a big Roman of a carrier, with a half-disk in silver set in the center of his forehead where the hair meets the brow.

"My name is Zola," explains the carrier.

"There is a great man of that name beyond the sea," says Mrs. Lehman, — and the carrier expresses a blissful conviction of his rejoicing in that light. "But he is dead," continues Mrs. Lehman. "A pity!" cries out the carrier in such an accent of personal loss as would puzzle you to explain — unless you had some sort of sense of the intense preoccupation with self which is characteristic of these people, and which fastens upon all available matter.

April 26.

I certainly must tell you that several new members have been admitted to the Nsamba — which is the class of instruction preparatory to church membership. Only earnest Christians are taken on this list. There were some fine

lads, some men, Vunga (Benzhuli's wife), and some other women. The Nsamba must number thirty now. Well, it is awfully hard for the old Ngumba women to learn the Commandments in Bulu, but that is a condition of membership, and it is pitiful and funny to hear their examination. One old woman, Mpashima, fixed Mr. Fraser with a most earnest gaze and said, "Thou shalt not kill another's — woman!" About then I wished I had as big a hat to cover my mouth as Motefi held over his face — he spent most of this hour behind his hat and I was glad he had it.

It was fine to hear Nzonbui rehearse without a break and with calm intelligence. Poor, sweet little Vunga nearly fainted, though she knew them perfectly. You should have seen her when they stood in a row to agree to certain doctrines before admittance. One of these reads, "Do you acknowledge that God made man and woman equal?" Very slowly went up the young Vunga's arm, and her eyes sought her husband, who sat behind her, with the prettiest air of deprecation. She certainly is a charmer. I was called in consultation when she had a misunderstanding with Benzhuli once. "Don't let yourself get angry with Benzhuli about your garden work," said I sagely, "for you know that he is very ignorant."

"Ignorant!" says Vunga, in a passionate, scornful calm, "very ignorant he certainly is!"

May 4.

This is written from the new site. There is moonlight outside and all about in the clearing, — heaps of burning logs, — so that the forest is apparent in a circle about us, and nearer than this the slender corn set at random among the stumps. Plantains there are, too, — mostly young, — and, oh, walk very gently lest you tread down my little tomatoes that I planted, and my orange slips. To the maternal eye these were most promising, and I felt a real pang when Dr. Lehman said they looked sickly.

It was the 1st of May I moved, my dears, — I woke early. It seemed a fitting date for such a celebration. At nine o'clock of the morning all my household goods, carried in procession, took the sun; and a brave glittering was that. Much honor was done them by the inhabitants of the villages by the way. You would have marveled to see certain of my belongings — so familiar to you — carried aloft under such alien skies. All day that day and all day the next day I superintended the placing of loads, and to-day the Lehmans moved down. The first night and the second I slept in the house with Bitum for

company, — Mr. Hummel slept in the store-house, and the moonlight flooded the open spaces of the house. You know how Tintoretto's holy families set up their little establishment in some corner of a house still in the building — just like me, — only I had n't any family.

May 5.

It was amusing and interesting to-night to see the work-boys come in for the money they will put in the plate to-morrow, when a collection will be taken — the first collection taken in the church, though the Christians have contributed always. Almost all the boys had their "books cut" for a sixpence or a mark, and there sat Dr. Lehman handing out the silver to the crowd. I remembered father giving us our five centses for the plate. There in the crush sat Minkoo, the little steward, mending his beautiful new trousers — with an unmistakable air of Saturday night. We observe communion to-morrow. People from Lam and from Ipose passed to-day on their way to Lolodorf, where the service will be held for lack of a house here. When I saw the poor dears come in single file, drooping under their burdens of children and food, and smiling in their wistful fashion, I was so happy.

THE HOUSE IN THE NEW CLEARING

THE VILLAGE STREET

May —.

We have been down at our new site nearly a month, and begin of late to develop windows and doors, just as we begin to realize that these are effete luxuries. We live in tenement fashion, all in one house; but this is the result of necessity and not of a perverted taste, and we mean — as I suppose all tenement dwellers do — to reform when our circumstances improve. We are all very polite to one another, and that is a great help.

This is Saturday morning, when the schoolteacher does her odd jobs. To escape the sound of other odd jobs I have come down to the schoolhouse, which should be, on this day of the seven, neither schoolhouse nor church, but just a roof over a clearing in the forest. From the dwelling-house to the schoolhouse is some eight hundred feet, and this is about the diameter of our present clearing. The forest stands charmed about this breach. Here the fallen trees measure their amazing barren stretch of fallen trunk, and the scant, withering crown of foliage that makes so small a display upon the ground. Everywhere the logs burn. In these gray days of the rainy season the clearing is filled with a perpetual thin blue smoke. Here and there among the débris of the forest appears the corn in ragged

companies of invasion — the advance guard of that old army that served the Pilgrim Fathers. Everywhere in the incomplete clearing is activity: men rolling logs and chanting as they labor; men in single file carrying on their shoulders the house-posts and the long, straight length of a roof-tree. Chanting as they come, men bringing in rolls of the yellow bark which serves us for walls and which they spread out to dry, a bright pool of color under the sky; companies of lads coming in at noon and at evening with loads of broad leaves, and singing the song of the roof-thatch.

From this island, cast up, you would say, by the sea of forest and seized upon by man, the earth under its cover of green falls away. To the north between the thinning trees we see the blue of ranging hills, to the south we see a hill. There are hills, I am told, all about us, which will presently appear. Through our property, and a few hundred yards from our door, runs the government road to the interior.

Here in the schoolhouse, where it was to have been quiet, Mr. Hummel is making benches with desk attachments. He is most complacent about this furniture, which is, indeed, very grand. Here, too, are fires lit to dry out our mud floor. Of a week day there will be two hundred

pupils, men, women, and children, under this roof. When you consider that we could not, at the old station, with the best will in the world, accommodate more than fifty boarders, and that we could not, under the most inventive system imaginable, provide, on our twelve acres, work to pay for the food of this number, you will realize how truly a new era has opened for us.

We do not yet have the boys properly housed; they sleep like forest creatures where they find shelter. Indeed, they have in the mass, at work in the open, a uniform forest aspect. But under the school-roof, ranged on their rows of logs and to the eyes of their teachers, what thrilling individual differentiations! There is a little boy whom I shall remember always as he stood in line for registration, though he will, it is to be hoped, make some more brilliant showing in the future. He was a very small boy with a fixed expression of panic and rather more than the average allotment of clothing. When his turn came, he was asked his name, but he could not bring his mouth to answer.

"Have you paid your tuition?" asked Mr. Hummel, — for this was a day scholar who must pay the equivalent of one mark for the term of ten weeks.

Still not a ripple of response on that little frozen face, only a flicker of fear in the eyes.

"If you have not paid, you must go to your town and find something, some food or a cutlass, something you must find."

Still no answer.

"Move on," said Mr. Hummel.

Then, coming to life, the little boy thrust his hand into the bosom of his upper garment, and brought out, from where it had lodged over his stomach, a little fat-bodied bottle of green fluid, — lavender water by superscription, and doubtless very potent to anoint the person. He was enrolled, and it doth not yet appear what he shall be.

Sometimes little boys go far in a short time. Yesterday, in that half-hour before school opens and when the advanced pupils gather to study, I took note of a little boy who sat on the front bench of the senior division. He is, I suppose, eleven years old, an eager little chap, very careless and heedless but clever, and quite able to teach the beginners in German. Mr. Hummel has put him in charge of the first German chart. Now, as he sat dangling his feet, he covered his eyes with his mottled German primer and was still. I knew that he was praying about his lessons and his chart class and all his little difficult concerns.

Presently school begins. Mr. Hummel reads, and asks a Bulu boy to pray, which he does standing up, calling down blessings in his sweet staccato voice upon "Mamma Ford" and "Miss" Hummel and "Mr. Matchenda." Then these three worthies, girded for the task and doubtless blessed in spite of certain indiscretions of address, set about clearing the forest of the African mind.

You can't think how sweet the women of this country are. We have just come out from a nine weeks' quarantine for smallpox, and in all those weeks I had no other occupation than to go about in the villages and acquire affable Ngumba manners. The time was happy for me because the women began to love me, to be very sweet and maternal toward me. It is beautiful to see their gentle ways with me, whom they take, in spite of every protestation, to be a little girl. They think that I am ashamed of my extreme youth and they have a little sly, smiling way of agreeing to any age I may suggest. They begin now to tell me of their poor struggles to be good; their Waterloo is inevitably the Seventh Commandment. They are very pitiful about this. The more one cares for them, — and you must see that one comes to care very much, — the more one is grateful to Christ that He saw such things in the flesh.

May 27.

There is a woman living in this neighborhood — fat, my dears, beyond any experience of mine; I mean, fatter than any I have ever seen, and fatter, of course, than I have ever been. I want you to understand that this woman is really very fat. She is a monstrosity. And she carries very openly the tragedy of being very fat — the tragedy of being belied by one's aspect — which would have one gross, whether or no. Marie Bashkirtseff painted that into her portrait of her Cousin Dina. The fat woman's name is Menge. She lives in a town near by; and when I have spoken in that town she has brought her huge bulk to the house where I sat and has dropped it near me, looking at me from the heap of it very gravely, — she is not one of your rollicking fat women.

Yesterday Bian, the elder, said that Menge wished to confess her belief. But she did not come to church to-day; she had not courage — poor, fat, desperate woman — to face the smiling faces that always turn her way. After church Mr. Fraser sent for Bian to bring her, and I saw her come — following after Bian down the path that runs past the house to the church. Bian had the air of a lion-tamer, but not an absolutely secure lion-tamer, and the poor woman! she had

the air, my dears, of martyrdom. It was raining and she held an inadequate umbrella over her body, which was nude except for a leaf apron and bustle. She swayed on her slight ankles, — walking is no joke for her. I greeted her as she passed, but she made no answer. I spoke to her again — no answer; then said Bian, with his air of cautious lion-tamer, "Greet Matchenda!" At that she turned her small face on me and I saw the misery of it; she was running with patience the race which was set before her; she might not cast off the weight either, and the cloud of witnesses was hard to be borne; she was bearing the cross and she had set her teeth at the shame. In her poor dim way she was looking unto Jesus — who was the author of her faith and who would finish it. After she said "Mbolo" — with no comfort to herself or to me — she went off down the path, her bustle beating about her legs and the rain running off the points of her umbrella onto her body. It was altogether one of the least amusing things I ever saw. Mr. Fraser says that she was absolutely direct in her confession. Bian came to me afterwards in a passion of protection — and would n't I please help her all I could. "You who are the thinnest — you who are the smallest — help her all you can," said Bian the lion-tamer, or something else like that he said.

July 3.

On Sunday Bekalli preached. It was great. The house was packed, which it has not been since our coming down here. Little boys hung about the platform and sat upon the ground. Manjuer Bian sat upon a chromo of the Kaiser which was waiting to be hung; she broke the glass and we led her gently off. Everywhere there was a pleasant happy stir.

Bekalli is a little man; he wears a white singlet and a dark cloth with a red border. I noticed when he stood up that he was immaculate. He stood for half a minute with his customary expression of quiet happiness; suddenly he smiled — and then he went off like a sky-rocket. The house hummed in answer to him, and his images passed in procession. I am sure I could n't tell you what it was all about, — he spoke in Ngumba, — but he held me for thirty minutes. Scotch blood is so tyrannical; I thought — poor Scotch spinster thing — that I was his mother, the mother of the dear little minister. And I had this very same obsession on a gray Sunday three weeks ago when Ngwa, long and dark in his overalls, preached to a rainy-day audience, his teeth clenched on his natural shyness and his poor sermon balking all the way.

July 4.

I have just come in from one of the workmen's huts, where half a dozen women are preparing food while as many men sit in the firelight waiting their portion. Nshicko has been drawing melancholy pictures of that time when the women will dominate the men. "For it will come," says he; "I see it coming." Happy the man, said I, — no, — I said like this: "Then who will see good but the man with no more than one wife — pity the man with five!" "And I," said Nshicko, "shall have none! I shall make a little clearing in the forest and kill any woman who comes near it."

I must tell you; the doctor has been having lots of patients with dysentery, from among the carriers. At one time there were eight in the hospital — poor spent fellows that crawled in here to die. And this they promptly did, but not all of them. There are two in a little cabin by themselves, and, oh, but they are hungry for forbidden fruits! One had roasted an ear of corn, and when the doctor took it from him the poor thing cried. To-day the doctor put a bit of meat into the makabo soup he sent them, and when he went out to see how they liked their soup, he found those two poor skeletons fighting over the bit of meat. One of them was tak-

ing a stick to the other — and they were libeling one another. "He is of the tribe that eat people," whimpered one, "he would just like to kill people and eat them."

The carrier is being driven pretty hard at present. Dr. Lehman weighed a little girl and her load, — the load hit the twenty-six kilos [1] and the child went one kilo better, twenty-seven. This is common enough. Poor little girls!

July 10.

On Friday we did not get into Ipose until three, because we sauntered. There was my nice little hut, with my bed-bag still hanging to the ridge-pole, and very soon "the bed was made, the room was fit." One little table I spread with a clean oilcoth; on this I write and eat. On the other table I put out my tea-basket; it is my joy, and makes it possible for me to eat. The utensils shine gloriously. For supper I had an egg and a corncake and some canned cherries.

At five o'clock I spoke in a palaver house. Two little girls slept in the hut with me, quietly and nicely, like little kittens. I asked them whether they trusted in God and they said,

[1] A kilo is two and a fifth pounds. In later years the government enforced a maximum tariff of weights and corrected, so far as possible, these abuses.

"We don't know yet whether we trust in God or whether we are very bad people."

Twelve women came with me from Ipose to Lolodorf, wishing to attend Communion and trusting to my protection by the way. When we left the forest for the government road, the donkey met us, not by chance as this would seem to read, but by design forcibly borne in upon the donkey by a Bulu boy. So you see your child astride a small, loitering beast, and following close after, a file of twelve women and girls, all laden with garden food for their journey, and presenting that uniform patient aspect of burden-bearers which is so pitiful and so common. We made our twelve miles comfortably enough and were not molested.

Bitum has a love-affair which runs thus: "Now, I was out, but not exactly to hunt a wife (though my goats have increased) when I saw a Bulu girl, and I stopped right there. 'I love you,' said I, 'and I won't hunt any further.' 'And I love you,' said she, 'but another man is paying for me.' So we sent for her father to come from his town — for she was just visiting her nephew (and her nephew did certainly like me) — and when her father comes to my town my brothers will have the palaver cut. If her father won't agree, we will take it to the gover-

nor. Strange thing — we are just of a size and very much resemble — you would say we were of one mother!"

I saw the bitter end of a marriage palaver to-day. Mbinawon — a girl who has been with the Lehmans for years — hated to marry the man who was buying her — a terrible heathen. Moreover, she had another in mind, — who is of her own generation — a Christian with no other wife. But Mbinawon's father could n't collect the goods which had been given him for her and he was in a fine box. To-day he followed the only course open to him, — he gave over another daughter, Dada, a child of something like seven — ugly at all times and to-day, under a tissue-paper hat, ugly as a gargoyle. Her poor little stomach stuck out under a Mother-Hubbard dress; her whole little body was rigid with fear. All her relatives howled with anguish at her departure, and presently Dada howled, too; it was dreadful. I shall see her from time to time, as she has been bought by an Ipose man. Poor little wretched Dada!

July 27.

On Monday I went to Ipose. I took a hammock for as much of the way as was open road; in the forest I walked. It rained, and where

the path ran through clear growths of cane or high grasses I enjoyed all the benefits of a box shower. I rather thought that I would go to bed and so escape rheumatism and other ills. The people of Ipose, seeing me while I was yet afar off, blew the horn which calls to service and summons the people from their gardens and the neighboring villages. The costume of the preacher deserves to be described in detail: A dry dress over a nightdress, stockings made of a blue polka-dot handkerchief, and shoes made of bits of oilcloth. I promise never, never to dress so again, especially at home. I promise to take a complete wardrobe and a clothes-wringer when next I go to Ipose. But, really, I was thought to be rather presentable there, and was not without honor. I spoke in the morning and evening to more people than I have yet spoken to — I 'm sorry, but I have n't an idea as to how many, for I am always too much interested in what I am doing to count. But I had the nice, cozy feeling which comes with a full house.

In the evening, after I have eaten, the women and children crowd into my hut and we talk, but not necessarily on serious subjects. I think that I shall manage to get out there every two or three weeks after things get under way.

Efulen, July 31.

I have a line written to you on the road, but can't get at it now. I got in this afternoon, and there is this chance to mail before I go to bed, and to say I had a fine time.

I saw girls, my dears, with green vines bound about their brown bosoms and the flash of their brass armlets as bright as sunlight in the green gloom. If only you could know how lovely it was to dip into the peace of the forest and to stay there. I shall tell you a lot by the next mail, but I would rather go to bed now. This station is certainly nearer the clouds than I expected.

On the road, July 27.

If you want me to-night you will have to call up Son Ntangan, which being interpreted means the "White Man's Grave." This is no flight of fancy nor any false pretension to distinction. The Grave is really here. I have pitched my tent in the shade of the palms which mark it. Otto Lübcke, born in 1850, died in 1894 on the road, and buried here, poor man. Alone at his death, and his grave lost in this forest village! Tied to the pickets about the grave is a china leopard, as big as a kitten. There is a tradition that his mother, wishing very much to see his grave, sent this — well, say, substitute. You

can think how likely! But if it had been the wish of the government to establish a guardian spirit, none more effective than the china leopard could have been devised. The grave is clean, and held in respect. We left the station at one o'clock (school closed this morning) and "fell" at four.

July 28.

Like dogs as much as you can, you cannot like African dogs. When you come here, I will teach you how to speak to an African dog when you want him to go away. It is fine to think that I know all about a bush path at last. When the older missionaries wag their heads and say, "What do you know of bush paths?" I shall be able to say, — modestly, of course, not to antagonize them, — "I crossed from Lolo to Efulen by the bush once."

We had a bad hour and a half this morning, up and down hills, and walking logs still wet with dew; but everything held, and presently we came out by the Bekui, grown since I saw it at Lolodorf. I crossed in an abominable canoe which had broken both noses. I asked the lad who paddled me, "What sort of canoe is this? Do you want to kill the white woman?" "No," said he, with all gravity; "I am a person from *Ipose!*"

Sunday, July 29.

I thank goodness that the heat of the day is done. We had a meeting this morning — about fifty people, perhaps less. Every one made himself comfortable in the palaver house, on a bed or a mat, and took my discourse philosophically. The headman here is a sort of good-humored old fellow, easy-going and wise in the ways of his world, wise in the ways of the aboriginal heart. He listens to the chat of my young carriers with a wise and smiling tolerance. You should hear them tell animal stories. I sat for an hour in the palaver house this afternoon, and I saw more snakes than I ever saw before, with no more apparatus than the hands and the forearms of the carriers. Beautiful gesture is common here, rather more with the men than with the women; beautiful, free gesture, and dramatic impersonation pushed to the limit. This evening we had another meeting in another village of the same town — about thirty, mostly men. Malandé translated my Bulu into Ngumba for me. He is wonderfully clever at translation, and will not omit so much as a gesture, so that the speaker gets a curious impression of looking into a mirror which reflects — with a difference.

This morning I walked through a lovely bit of forest with the river for company. Yester-

day I had a little fever, and to-day all objective impressions have that perfection which I have often noticed as a circumstance of physical weakness. Convalescents see the world in that beautiful, clear light. This morning the brown and the green and the gray of this world, the gray of the orchids hanging still in the gray air, the little brown boy passing in the street of the village with a gourd on his shoulder, — a new gourd, as green as a young leaf, — all these I saw this morning with a quickened sense.

We left Nkutu at a bit after six; and at half-past seven we reached a town where we knew the paths to part, one short and difficult and the other long, and difficult, too, for all we knew. We were for the short path and some one must be found to guide us. The incredible evil of that town has become a tradition with my carriers, and its impudence. The only man who would agree to go asked sixteen marks! He might as well have asked a hundred. We laughed in his face. The carriers picked up their precious loads, the hammock-men their invaluable woman, and we shook the dust of that lost town from our feet. We took the long road, and asked the way as we went. Oh, the lovely, lovely day, my dears! Uphill and down in the unbroken still shade, and then the long avenue of a de-

serted clearing. Miles of this, like a great overgrown road, and always with its haunting suggestion of a people past and forgotten. Here is a beautiful river, and here were many towns that defied the government at the time of the Bulu War. Where the villages stood, the grass grows waist-high and the trees of the forest make their unchallenged return. Once I saw an old call-drum, rotting and silent these eight years; and not another human implement did I see in all the long clearing. Early in the forenoon we stopped and held a meeting in one of the villages of Ngongo, a fine string of towns by a river. This was still Ngumba. Long ago Dr. Silas Johnson and his wife passed through here, and are remembered. At noon, at the top of a great hill, we came into the first Bulu town. Here we ate and I spoke to the people. All the afternoon we walked in the forest. Not one soul did we pass on that little path; few enough had we passed on the trip up to then. At three we came out at a town where my men ate and I lay resting in a great, cool palaver house. There was no sun this day. At five, my tent was pitched on the top of a hill with the country to the west spread out for my approval. There was the tent for a home and the cot for all comfort. Kulu fed me. The carriers slept in a house near

THE CALL DRUM

by; I was able to buy them a little venison, and every face shone. My dears, if only you could have seen the pretty piece of mischief that hung about my camp that night. I noticed her first for her round charm, a bustle for a dress, and plenty of brass armor. Then I saw her ogling my haughty young carriers, who gave her such terribly insolent snubs as surprised me. For myself, I could no more look at her severely than at a kitten, though I knew well enough that she was a very naughty little heathen girl. "If you want to make a visit," said I, "visit me. Come here, into my tent." So she came, pouting. "I have a great trouble," said she, in her mellow girl voice, "I feel it very much in my heart. I am a person to be pitied. Look at me, the great grown girl that I am, and not married. I work very much to get a husband and not a man will marry me. I know that Mr. Johnston has said that any woman that has a trouble may speak of it to Mamma, and I feel this very much. So I ask you to show me a husband." Stopping at this point, which would pass almost anywhere, I think, for a climax, she looked at me tragically, but with some eagerness of expectation. "And can a guest cut such a palaver?" — and more of such unsatisfactory matter I handed out to her of a

moral nature. Depression grew upon her. "I am tired of waiting," said she; "I want the thing to come to a finish." "Go to bed," said I; "I don't want you about here." But presently she came back in a rage. My terrible boys had treated her harshly, and I must in justice correct them. "Kulu, I want to hear this palaver," I called; and Kulu's voice came back through the dark, a disgusted boy voice, "Miss Mackenzie, I hate to!" But he had to; and then, my dears, if you could have seen those two young beauties in the light of my lantern — Kulu looking down at her over his lifted chin with a primitive youthful scorn that suddenly made Adonis a perfectly credible person, and that little teasing termagant declaiming her wrongs. They had trampled upon her kindness in drawing them water, and bringing them firewood; they had tormented her. "Listen to me," said I, "If you are wise, you will shun such cruel people." Kulu kindled. He had watched me narrowly, and now beamed at me and at her. "Aha! Do as she says!" But the girl drooped.

I had a meeting here. A bad night with a fine rain, but quite thirty people came to hear. But you can see for yourself that I found few people on the trip, when you consider the extent of it. I spoke very especially to the women, and this

night they seemed to feel a wonder at the condescension of God. The next day we walked until three, when we reached Efulen. At one town we were resting in the palaver house; a few women came in, and it proved that one of them was the aunt of Malandé and that the town was his mother's town, to which she had never returned since her marriage long ago. Now was great rejoicing, not clamorous, for greetings are commonly subdued; but Malandé, great shy fellow, must sit, after the ancient custom, on the knees of his newfound relatives; which he conscientiously did, with eyes cast down and who knows what sensitive apprehension of the white woman's ridicule. All the carriers were much excited by this chance meeting, and there was prolonged comment as we walked on through the forest. At noon, suddenly, I lay down in a shelter, and Kulu got me tea. Food mended the matter, and we made the last three hours in great shape. At Efulen that care to which the carriers had accustomed me made way for the normal circumstance of life, and ever since I have missed it. I had two hammock-men, — for no more could be found at the last, — a tent-boy, a bed-and-bag boy, a boy to carry odd things for me and for the hammock-men and the cook. When I saw these five going off next

morning with their pay, — boots and cloths and what not, — why, I wanted to go too. And I could n't see how they could leave me in such good cheer, who had carried and cared for me so long.

August 5.

Efulen hill rises high and abrupt in a nest of young mountains. All about us hangs the forest. Not a level of green tree-tops, as would appear from an elevation in a more rolling country, but here and there, where an abrupt rise breaks the continuity, appear the white ranks of trunks supporting a scant garlanded foliage that shows the mauve or the russet or the coral of a new leaf. Between the multiplied folds of the mountains is a mist, a moving veil of blue. In this morning light, when the early sun picks out the massed colonnades from the body of the forest, there is a suggestion of those uninhabitable pictures by Turner — dream forests about dream temples. It is incredible that one should undertake to travel in the painted world about this hill, and I cannot conceive that I came here through such forbidding beauty.

Dr. Good's house still holds together. At least they say he lived there. I suppose they know; but this man, who came first into the

Bulu interior, who cleared this hill and adopted this country, who certainly is buried here, has come to be so complete a legend in the African tradition that a legendary and elusive quality attaches to my conception of him. He will not take form in my imagination — I mean credible form. He is so much more the "Ngutu Zambe" of native memory — who was "walking, walking, always walking," and who came from God more directly than can be explained — than he is a man like another.

I think that this remote and heroic aspect of Dr. Good is more common than people realize. I watch him as he appears in the missionary memory, and he always moves in a glow of prehistoric glamour with a shining helmet like Lohengrin's, all ready to put off for a far country. I am so sorry to be here in vacation, and while Mr. Johnston is away. He is a big man in this part of the world.

Efulen, August 10.

You should see the senior Christian of this interior people. Such a little, old, wise, smiling woman, smiling at youth and its dear foibles, smiling at certain happy secrets of her own old age. I went to see her the other day, waiting for her in her hut until she appeared in the clear

light of the opening, where she left her load of firewood. Greetings come after a decorous silence. She put her little old brown body close up against me where we sat on the bed, and then her hands on my knees and then on my shoulders, before she said *Mbolo;* all the time she was smiling at me with that kind, wise tolerance of age that is so reassuring to the pessimistic young — the very, very young, like me. The mystic Dr. Good appeared in her conversation in his shining helmet, going about from town to town on that visit from his home with God which was so amazing and so — well, say, so fecund in its results. Presently, like Lohengrin, he goes away; and when he went, says Nana, looking at me smiling, "I was a little new thing — me mbe obe mfefé." Then I saw Dr. Good in a new character, — a sort of anguished widow, dying, and leaving a great many more orphans than is common. And I believe this impression gets nearer the man. It was good to talk to that old woman, so wise and kind and merry, so much a pledge and a sign to a missionary. She has gray hair and is slightly undershot, if it is polite to speak of old ladies so. Smaller than I am, she is. When I went away I felt cheered in my deepest feelings.

I did not tell you about the drinking at Ipose

because I thought it would worry you. It was so much simpler than it sounds. I was sleeping there one night and had got to bed when I realized that the men in the palaver house were noisy — we have drinking enough in our forest for me to recognize the note. I got up, lit my lantern, and went to the palaver house. I agree that I was afraid. By the light of the fire they were laughing and chatting — perhaps ten of them. And, sure enough, they were drinking. They looked at me in their customary friendly way; no one was tipsy. I told them that it was taboo for the white woman to sleep in a town where the men were drinking; and that the white men would certainly have opposed my visit to Ipose had they supposed that the men of Ipose would drink while I was their guest, and that I must move on if they did not stop. They said, why, so they *were* drinking; Mabiama had returned from a journey and they were recounting adventures, but because of my word they would stop. And they stopped. It was as simple as that. I went back to my hut; and I could hear the talk thin out and die away as the men parted or fell asleep. Soon only the sheep stirred in the town of Ipose.

Mrs. Johnston will go back to Lolodorf with me, —to "show me the path," and to make us a visit.

Lolodorf, August 30.

Mr. Hummel left for America yesterday at noon. As I saw him break away from the school-boys that hung about him, I was glad, almost with a sense of disaster averted, that there were others of us left.

September 2.

Yesterday, my dears, was no common day, it was too lovely. I moved into my own room. Don't think that you can imagine my joy, not nearly, as we say in Bulu. The room fourteen by sixteen maybe, or seventy-five by a hundred. There is a porch on two sides and a little dressing room. As yet there is no ceiling-cloth and I can see the roof-tree up in the gloom. It rained last night, and as I lay in my little bed at this remote end of the house, in this big room of pleasant shadows, with my beloved articles of furniture lost in dim corners, why, I felt very solitary, indeed, like a person in a lonely bed in a lonely room in a lonely house down a lonely rainy lane in a lonely village. This feeling was quite blissful, whether you believe it or not, and I could hardly sleep for the pleasure of it.

To-day Bian preached. I understand father so much better than I used to, and his incredible seminary classes in which every man was the

superior, at the very least, of his fellows. Bian rubbed it in pretty hard, about the tree which was to be cut down if it did not bear, and cried out in refrain, "He that hath ears to hear let him hear." People are of two kinds, he explained, — the timid and the bold. "We people of God are timid and look to God for shelter from the wrath to come, but you others who are the bold ones, — remember this, that you must be bold to the *end!* You, who can bear with boldness to hear the Word of God and to despise it, must bear with equal boldness that punishment which you will see; there must be no cry from you then, who are so bold. The deer who can bear to look the hunter in the eye must bear to die!"

Now, this was said with a very direct delivery and with no very conspicuous emotional appeal. It was, I take it, as nearly a pure African product as one is likely to get in our business; and it produced a peculiar indefinable excitement in the mind, which may or may not be due to a natural interest in the working of the African mind — no common spectacle. But it may be due to some other intrinsic characteristic of the African process. I have often felt the same mental excitement when listening to African eloquence.

September 19.

Last night we went to see a tree that had fallen near the boys' house. The boys' quarters are among plantains and fallen trees. In the little clearing, before the squat line of huts, pushed and chattered the life of the station. In an open space apart by himself sat a boy at a rude table, writing. The dusk was closing in and he had a precious candle lighting the still air about him, and the cloth which he wore like a cape, and the grave young face, — his face that is both grave and gallant, with its incredible air of thought and pride and sentiment. Passing him we came in among our friends, all laughing and glad of food and rest. Presently we stood on the fallen tree, like the floor of a corridor among the plantains. I said to Mrs. Lehman, "Let's look at Africa." So we did; and there among the brown logs and the brown huts the violent young brown bodies gesticulated and rejoiced over their kettles. The eye could deduce neither more nor less than this, and I cannot tell you how much there was of squalor and the savage. Only at the other end of the clearing Obam — sitting alone by his point of light — leaned his head over his writing.

September 20.

Here is news for you and me and light upon the future. Mrs. Lehman and I, walking along the Mfaka, the government road, at dusk, met a woman with whom we stopped to talk. She had a huge fresh flourish of tattoo between her shoulder blades, and Mrs. Lehman asked her why she submitted her body to such pain. "Because," said the woman, "these marks will buy me food after death." Mrs. Lehman expounded the future to the confounding of such commerce. The woman listened with growing wonder, until her emotions went beyond her discretion and she flung her arms about me, laughing. The African, you must know, is very social, and wants a friend against whom to lean in every moment of interest. We were very much interested. We had never heard this use of tattooing so much as whispered; but when we came to ask, all the boys, laughing and shamefaced, said it is commonly believed.

September 21.

It is pleased entirely father would have been these nights if he could have seen his daughter sitting in her room with her friends as close as herrings all over the floor — big lads and little ones, and women and girls, all come in

For to admire, for to see, for to behold this world so wide

that I let them into. Never a newcomer but said, "I want to see your father," when I always owned up to him on the wall, and to mother too. Expressions of admiration and astonishment were unfailingly offered before the shrines; after which and other introductory matter we would get down to business, which was of no less a matter than the accounting for and the justifying of all given conditions under heaven and beyond. No one who was not on the spot and in the heart of it can guess how busy and excited people are who engage in creating a universe. For myself, I have come to the end of a most vivid experience. I seem to have been so necessary to the process, and so popular, and so successful, that I am really embarrassed in speaking of it, lest I loom too large.

The boys went home this noon for ten days, and it can hardly ever be the same again. I think back to its beginning, a small matter of a question or two, of an evening, and then suddenly, the Bible to be explained and the solar system, but most urgently man to be explained! I was pretty weak on the solar system, I must say; but I made a fair showing on the Bible, and when it came to man I shone, and every

one shone, and there was a perfect conflagration. We had about four nights of such joyous deliberations, and to-night I feel rather lonely.

The boys felt so happy to go home that I felt cravings on my own account, and wished that I might make up a little bundle of some odd things in a plantain leaf, and walk all day and all night till I saw the fires of home winking through the cracks of the hut in Seventy-eighth Street. Then I would cry out, "Me soya!" and mother would rise up and cook for me — something special, of course, no matter what the time of night.

Try reading Birrell of a Sunday in Africa. It is awful beyond reason — hard to say why, too academic, perhaps. Racine is pretty bad, too, because he deals with self-consuming passions in a world so naked of other properties that an imaginative hermit begins to have apparitions. Shakespeare is just about right; his ghosts are better company than some people.

September 30.

I never have any time now except in the afternoon, when my energies run rather low from the exertions of the morning. In the evenings my room will be full of people — women and the schoolboys — who come to talk with me

or to sit quietly in the pleasant lighted room. I sit and sew in my steamer chair, and all the time, my dears, there is the effort to pass the barriers of kind. We were talking so last night — about the common uses of life — when a certain young fellow, who had been listening with a sad attention, leaned his head on his hand with a kind of sad weariness and said directly to me, across the heads of the others and the current of our talk, — across my effort and his effort, — "How we differ!" I cannot tell you how much there was of balked endeavor and of relinquishment in his eyes; because, you see, — and he saw better than you can, — the difference is so much to his disadvantage. But such a look is a challenge. How can you understand the necessity of rousing the courage of self in such as these? Though maybe you do, my dears, — you seem to understand so much. I think you must understand why I am willing to give up my evenings to who ever comes. One comes to have such different methods and such different hopes as one comes to know — and such different illusions, too, I suppose. Thank goodness the time has passed when — after a passionate appeal to a higher nature, as conceived by the appellant — the sordid answer broke the heart. I declare that I can pass from the subject of

integrity to the subject of salt fish without any sense of eloquence gone to waste. And one comes to have trust in time, an optimistic attitude toward its processes. There is no little boy or big blunderer so unpromising but I can call up Time and turn over the case. "Take care of him for a year." There is a certain expression, common and very moving, a veil of softening over the passions of an African face, and that is the habit of self-control and of subjection to the spirit of God. There is not a member of the church but has this expression — which is quite a mystical blending of suffering and joy; and I never see the shade of it settle on a boy's face but I have to care for him.

October 3.

Do you remember when Ze and Malinga had their little son, Simon? A year ago last February, and they were so happy. Last week the little boy died from eating poison mushrooms. This morning the word came from Elat, where Ze is studying for the ministry; and there was poor old Bunga, Ze's mother, who must know. Bunga loved the little boy so much, with that human passion of the old for the young of their blood. When I went into her hut this morning, she lay with her face in the dust of the ground.

Presently she looked at me and raised herself ever so little. She shook her head, with her eyes on mine. It may sound simple, that she shook her head, but it was too much for me. She put her face in the dust again, and I cried. After a while she rose and brought a toy wringer which Mrs. Lehman had given Simon. This she contemplated with a kind of wonder, turning the silly little crank of it and wiping the dust from it. Suddenly, out of this dry silence, she burst into the heart-racking wail of this country, and fell to gesturing with movements terribly tense and singularly angular, angular like the movements on an Egyptian inscription, and tense with tragic human protest. All the life of that little child was rehearsed in this new light of terror and pity: its birth, and its little career. People came and went in the hut, conjured up by the passion of that old woman. I saw myself stoop in at the door and heard myself say, "It is a fine child." And many other scenes I saw, until the past crowded in and filled the hut. Then it was gone; she dismissed it; all that play of gesture was put aside, and the old woman drooped on the ground.

Now she began to call ever so softly to her little grandson and to peer out of the door. Presently she was wiping the dust from the toy.

On the wall there was a picture of Christ, out of a Sunday-school chart. Poor old Bunga got up and went to it, — not like a grown woman, my dears, but like a child. With her fingers she touched the face of it, followed the lines of it, and turning to me she said, in a whisper, "It is the Lord." And she wept.

When I went back in the afternoon she was sitting quietly in the ashes. She said that she felt very ill, poor old woman, but she was calmer and more susceptible to the comfort of human contact. Her neighbors are making it pretty hard for her, especially since Benzhuli's child died. It is quite clear that the children of Christians are doomed. But the old woman knows whom she has believed, and God looks after his own. Poor old woman!

October 10.

After supper I go to the quarters where the wives of the workmen sit at leisure in the short dusk. It will be dark when I get back to my room and the people begin to drift in. I never really want them to come; before they come I am always hoping perhaps they won't come tonight, but by eight o'clock it is so interesting that I am glad; and when I go to bed I lie and wonder at the strange unformed world of which I have had glimpses. Little by little their fear

of ridicule is slipping from them, and I come nearer and nearer to the place where they live. The African is exceedingly secret; his thoughts move under cover. There is an obscure sense of mental excitement in any vital intercourse with a people so secret. There is, besides, a mental excitement in ministering to such a passion for knowledge. I cannot hope to give you any complete sense of how they inarticulately clamor about me of an evening. Their very silences, when they wait with shining eyes, are clamorous. I realize this, of course: that I both pipe and pay the piper. I pay a certain steep price for their — well, their diversion, if diversion it can be called which is at once so intense and so utilitarian. I pay the price of never — under the most harassing of circumstances — turning a deaf ear. This is a price. I also never laugh, but that is a trick, and no trick at all. If I did laugh, who would laugh with me? So it is easy not to laugh, but to lend the glad ear, when the grasshopper is a burden!

I enlarge so much upon this period of my life (as Santa Teresa says) because it offers certain very interesting aspects and I can't seem to present them; I can't feel that I am making you feel them. Probably you must wonder sometimes, as I do often enough (but never with any

sense of personal stake), as to the future of the African peoples. I don't know, my dears. I have not an idea. They wonder themselves; they have misgivings that haunt and shake them. They beg me to explain their low estate on any other ground, if I can, than their intrinsic inferiority. They see as clearly as you do that the normal man does not sleep away the thousand years, or all the ages. At least some of them see this and are weighed upon by heavy racial misgivings. Their ignorance is hateful to them; they suffer. They ask questions sometimes with all the air of confessing sins. I am speaking of the men, the young lads. The women are not so mentally conscious; they proclaim their stupidity, but attribute it to their sex. They are very much less mentally active. The men and boys acquire very quickly the rudiments of such knowledge as we offer; they develop really wonderfully; their present is full of promise, but the shadow on their past lies over all their days.

I can't work it out. But this is perfectly evident: God does indeed accept them and befriend them. They seem capable of deep spiritual experience that is like a flame to refine them. You must take my word for this, who will never see the strange and subtle change that I see.

October 12.

Now, this is the way I call the roll in the Bulu school. "Child of a guest!" "Here." "Three Dreams!" "Here!" "Boejeli Maballi!" No answer; try again, until a neighbor of the absentee explains that Boejeli is still in his town. "And why?" asks Matchenda. "Because his brother whipped him, and he said if his brother whipped him, why, he would just sit down in his town and not make school." "He hunts another whipping," says Matchenda, very stern; "he looks for me to whip him; tell him where I am! — Child of a Ngumba," to which name a boy of the Mvele tribe makes answer. "Biguer, why did you not come back to school yesterday?" "Because the people of my town enticed me to sit down." "Zambe, why were you absent?" "Because the people of my town enticed me" (Matchenda wakes from her trance and fixes these two with an eye, motioning with her chin to a bench by her side; the two sons of Adam come up higher). "Sala, where were you?" "The soldiers caught a little girl in our town, and therefore I could not come." Matchenda waves her chin at the bench; Sala drifts forward; and so it goes. Not, my dears, that I can claim to do the whipping. I write little notes to the doctor. "Whip this boy," write I, in a

fine flowing hand; the boy reads this reflected in my eye. "Give this to the doctor," say I; and the boy takes the note with something less cheerful than the American postman's mien. The Bulu school is the primary school, you understand; my advanced classes are in the German school. The older boys are quite beyond whipping; they behave, indeed, with uncommon decency.

October 25.

Here I was to have written ever so many things I had in mind, but Kulu came and began to talk. Presently I thought he was talking as one black person talks to another — and this was too interesting to call off; not, indeed, that he had anything much to say, but that the curious racy flavor was strong in all his talk and too good to lose, and too rare in such a continuous strain. "So we walked that day until night and then we slept *nkalebandé* [under a roof without sides]. We hated it, but we had to endure it. We were hungry, — dying of hunger, — but the cooking in the town was finished and the houses were shut. We had the wild mango nuts you had given us, and we said if only we had some water we would bear to eat nut soup; so Ko'o said he would ask a woman for water, and he

did. The house was shut and the woman said she had only the water in which she had cooked her meat. We said we would bear to drink that water, since we could not do better; so we had soup of the nuts you gave us, and that was all. We saw it bad. And with the morning we rose," — etc., etc., — until I felt the path under my feet. Presently he was philosophizing about his relations to his family. "Now, real grief," said he, "and does a man whose people still live know grief! he is not so much as acquainted with grief. People are of two kinds — those who know grief and those who do not"; and again, "Parents are such strange people — they never know when their child is grown — in the eyes of his parents he is still a child. I know this very well — by the very food my mother would have me eat." And so on and on, with the occasional swagger of his happy kind, and the occasional tenderness characteristic of himself, and the laugh that breaks through his sentences. He eats a handful of peanuts and drops the shells on the floor, not the shells, for they have been removed before the nuts were roasted, but the dry inner skin. Before he goes he tells me, with a kind of shy politeness, that every one is happy in the school for all Mr. Hummel is not here. This he means to be comforting, and it is.

He has no axe to grind; he really cares for my peace of mind. I can't say now why I have scribbled this trifling chatter, except that it is n't trifling to me. It is full of human interest, and with an occasional flash of something above the level of the surface — or a gleam of something below.

October 26.

To-day has been a miserable day — rainy. And last night I felt ill, and they said — all with one voice — that it was plain to see that I must abandon either my duties or my dissipations. And I, being ill, pledged myself to relinquish my dissipations — when the devil is sick, you know — and this morning the school was told that Miss Mackenzie could not be bothered with so many friends. I was obliged to Mrs. Lehman for telling them; she did it as nicely as could be. But I went back to the house and felt sorry and lonely and the way I feel ashamed to feel. I had a most interesting dream last night that would make you cry to read about it, only I won't tell you because it is vulgar to tell dreams. And I read in a paper the other day that it is vulgar to make a scrap-book of magazine verse; and I am sorry it is — because that is just what I was doing for Margaret,

and now I don't know if I ought. One would hate to give anything vulgar to Margaret; see how my pleasures "are a' weed awa'."

October 27.

Now the preceding is so nearly perfect a specimen of the effect of malaria upon the feeble-minded that you should hold it cheap at any price; but I give it to you (which is magnanimous in more ways than one) for ten cents — the price of the stamp and the fine for overweight. Still, I did feel balked yesterday.

October 29.

To-day I discovered a little girl of fifteen, or less, who can read. She is from the forest town of Moga — where I fell from my donkey when I went to the dwarfs. I asked her did she remember that incident, and she most certainly does. "I felt such shame that day," said she, quite drooping in reminiscence; "I was so ashamed — because all the townspeople said to me, 'And do the people of God fall off their donkeys like that?' " I hope you feel sorry for that poor unfriended child — married into a strange town, and striving as best she might to hold fast the honor and dignity of Christian living — when the white woman comes and

endangers it all, falling off her donkey like any common heathen! Little did I think when I offered such a spectacle that I was troubling such a poor little heart.

It takes an extraordinarily violent combination of color to take the eye in this country, but I saw something sufficiently vivid to-day. I was walking from Lolodorf at the gray end of day and came upon a group of people from the other direction. As we drew near, the little company opened out, and there in the midst shone the bright particular star. He wore a long tunic of dark-blue cotton, and this was banded about the middle of his body and through the middle of the wide sleeves with a red-and-yellow flowered pattern, a band quite eighteen inches wide and as exciting to the sense as a shout. The astonished eye hardly detached itself from this banner of vanity, but once done and the attention turned to the bearer, he was found to be, in the matter of youth and beauty, as terrible as an army. He exhibited to perfection that combination of languor and virility which is the special curious grace of his kind, and that passionate vanity which is a feminine foible and a male madness. You knew him for Narcissus and every passing face his pool. I have seen several such in Africa, always among the men; there

is no such high conscious beauty among the women. Attended by mere men he passed to the east, and I wonder in what village to-night he dances to the moon.

November 10.

Bitum came up from Ipose to confess to a breach of the Seventh Commandment. He has been teaching school there. The woman is not living with her husband. I talked to her and the doctor talked to Bitum. She is a rather silly person with questing eyes; I had suffered maternal anxieties as to Bitum's safety when first I saw those questing eyes. Well, never mind; that is what happened anyway; and I think it is a pity, but I don't think it is very dreadful. Certainly it is a pity. Bitum, of course, is removed from the school and from the church. The day he confessed, he sat, toward evening, in my room, — no dimples at all, but wiping his eyes on his crumpled felt hat. He had nothing to say; at least, he could not say it. But two days later, when he returned from closing school at Ipose, he came into my room and talked quite freely, wiping his eyes at intervals with his boy knuckles. This is the kind of thing he said: —

"It was a nice school. No one could see it

but must have thought it was a nice school. I used to worry about it sometimes; some little thing would go wrong and I would lie awake at night and think that the school was going to be ruined. But really it was a nice school sometimes. At noon my head would ache — a person would think the whole school was in my head. When I came away to-day not a child — not an old woman — but shed tears. They all shed tears — Ndungo Ze himself shed tears."

An interval during which Bitum follows the popular example.

"When we are children we like to think of what we shall do when we grow to be men, and I always chose to teach people and help them. In the afternoons when Ngem and I used to sit together and talk thus — did I ever choose anything else? Do you believe they will ever let me teach school again?"

So on and on — about his dreams and his performance and his poor young disappointment. Not very much about his repentance, but enough. I feel it rather hopeless to let you in on our attitude. We take such a defection as this with a certain resignation — at least, some of us do. The sins of the flesh present a simpler aspect than you can realize, and in such a case

as this do not inflict any social injury. The people at Ipose are puzzled at a judgment which removes Bitum on such a charge; only the Christians have any sense of the sin; and this is more a reasonable inference from the law than any quick sense. I can't explain to you without minimizing their wish and intent to keep this Commandment, which they think as good as any other. Bitum's trouble of soul has more to do with his disloyalty to Christ than with any sense of personal shame. He had meant to be obedient to his Master, and then he spoiled his service like a silly. We are having preparatory meetings this week; from where I sit I see his face, and I can't tell you how sometimes his poor bewildered boy heart looks out of his eyes. I seem never to have realized Bitum so completely as now: his nervous animation, the grace of his sudden gestures, the eagerness of his youth, and his sudden calms of gentle, earnest attention. I suppose you think that I feel very badly about this; and I do feel badly, but not so much as you think. We people who have come out into the wilderness are not too quick to start at a reed shaken by the wind. Neither do I take this defection of a young Christian lad to contribute anything in particular to my exceedingly vague ideas as to the possibilities of

the African race — either the possibilities or the impossibilities.

All this time I have been much occupied, — getting out of my room over into the Fords' house, — and I have been often weary. The Lehman children have a Bulu measles, and Mrs. Lehman is a much-worn woman; but I have had no leisure in which to help her, even if she had been of a mind to let me.

Saturday night.

Bitum has just left after two hours of such pathetic outpouring as would hurt you. At first he said he had five words to open for me, and he went at them in a sufficiently systematic fashion. But presently he was saying, "My heart is just dried up within me and my body is weak. If I sat with another man and there was food between us, he might have it all; and if I broke a kank and gave him half, my portion would fall to the ground before I would think to eat it. Every way I look I find no peace. The worst is that I cannot give up teaching school and that you won't take me back" (for I think it is best for him to go to his town until the next term of school, and then to do something more hardy than my work). "I cannot run from these thoughts — they are with me all

the time. I am surprised. I am like an animal that went away on a visit, and there was one who dug a pit for him, and the animal, returning, fell into the pit. He did not know of the pit — he fell in. I cannot see people as I used — something is wrong with my eyes. Now I walk as slowly as the chameleon, and so I will walk because of the evil which I was so quick to do. The path ahead is plain enough, but I am like a man who was walking, and something strikes him on the head from behind; he cannot forget that blow — he wonders about it and who did it and will it happen again; for all the path is plain before him, his thoughts are all behind him."

I cannot tell you all he said. I thought I had heard something similar before, so I began to read out of the Psalms, translating as I went along. There was the whole matter and the ancient anguish, — David's tears gathered up in God's bottle so long ago, — and Bitum said, "I would say you were reading from the heart of a man!"

Monday, November 12.

Bitum said good-bye to me last night to leave this morning. More than when he went to Ipose I hated to see him go. I tell you, I suffered real

pangs. It was Communion Sunday. He is, of course, stricken from the church roll. Very many people are here from Lam and Ipose, — I took all the time I could get to go about among the various huddles of them; and in one Ipose group I found Bitum, giving last directions to his flock, — how they were to conduct themselves, and achieve the Christian graces. The sad old women could hardly let him go. On Sunday he looked a nice proper Bulu youth in his white singlet and his bright cloth. On Saturday night, when we talked together, I had reproved him for his careless dress. "Have n't you anything decent in your box?" I had asked; and he had said, "Why, I have lots of things, but I can't bear to open the box; I think about how the body is more than raiment and the life than the body."

I do hope he will be good now. He will go in my caravan to Elat and carry a load. If I could bring myself to feel it right to take him back, I would have so much comfort in him; but I know that he must go if he is to be a man.

November 29.

I foresee that you are going to feel sore because I have had malaria again — but that is because you are so spoiled. You think there

should be some sort of special dispensation for your lamb. It was what Mrs. Ford calls a "normal little fever." I feel better to-night — quite well, indeed, but weak for a little. This is Thanksgiving, and every one has made a heroic effort to achieve a complete holiday atmosphere. The united efforts have succeeded with a vengeance. Your child is adrift on a sea of desolate horizons — she is skeptical to a horrid degree and wonders whether it is really "very nice to think the world is full of meat and drink." I want you to be glad because my women are learning their letters. "Strange things," moans Anzhia; "one learns some to forget others." But I detect a permanent deposit. My friends, my dears, — such as are on this side of the great oceans of sea, — are bitten with the fear that I am going away — mysteriously and without warning. They hesitate to ask me directly, — one wonders why, — but they fix me with a gaze all gloom and question.

One boy came in last night to ask, most sentimentally, would I let him see my father's handwriting, which I did with a pardonable pride. I must tell you: I have achieved a new grace, enchanting to my friends and a relief, in a measure, from a certain heavy sense of my lack of the common and essential virtues. When the women

come to see me now, I rush to my water pail and dip a pitcherful. This, with a cup, I lay at their feet, and my manner is a miracle of hospitality. I stand back, and they beam at me "Thanks!" They sigh; and the sigh is of a heart revived. They see the faint indication of a decent behavior, of a willing hospitality, and they think that I am coming, in spite of my blood, to be something more like a lady. They drink my water, leaning far over the cup, which they hold in midair and at arm's length, and we are all more happy than in those days when I had discovered no hole in the fence of mission policy, which is against the dispensing of benefits — and wisely so.

Part Three

THE MAIL FROM THE BEACH

Part Three

THE MAIL FROM THE BEACH

Libreville, West Africa,
July 10, 1908.

I WRITE you from Libreville on the Gaboon River in the French Congo; rather, I write from Baraka, the mission station among the Mpongwe people. I have been transferred hither from the Kamerun because I speak French, and there is need of such a French-speaking missionary here. Very charming it is at this station, in the old house among the old trees looking out upon the river and beyond this to the sunset. And very encouraging it is to a missionary from a young station to see these Mpongwe Christians, the fruit of half a century of missionary labor, who have come to be a people of pleasant and orderly life, living in their gray bamboo houses after no mean fashion, with books upon their shelves and clean linen upon their beds. Some of the houses are papered and some have cement floors; in some there are pictures of miscellaneous royalty upon the walls

and fading photographs of the family when they were bride and groom; in the little gardens flowers run from the sea wind. Of a Sunday the little church is full of a decent congregation who have come up to the House of God with pleasure and with pride, dressed, I suspect, with a good deal of conscious vanity, and observing solemn rules of conduct with great good cheer and complacency. Do not despise this joy in form and order; the house, after having been swept, is furnished after a new fashion that passeth not away, and how shall the owner conceal his delight? I call at the houses of the Christians and go about to the village prayer-meetings just for the pleasure of seeing these comely Mpongwe women move about in their enriched circumstance, — themselves enriched in mind and heart and spirit beyond all counting. To me the windows, open to the river; the great white beds under their white curtains and their covers of red and white appliqué; the tables dressed with a white cloth, where the wife eats with the husband, — all these are pledges of hope for the poor Bulu woman, for the Ngumba woman, for the little dwarf woman in the hidden places of the forest, and for the Fang woman who lives in the waterways back of us as the dweller in Third Avenue lives back of the dweller in Fourth.

Baraka has its potent past. One may not forget the women of long ago who were busy at its inception, in hoops, — if, indeed, they stooped to vanity, — with curls back of their ears or smooth hair drawn over them. Some of these are long dead, some of them are in America, some are still among us, — these last so much a part of our present that we hardly associate with them a past of so quaint an aspect. But the past survives intact in the memory of the old Mpongwe women. "Mrs. Walker was very kind," says one, in that soft English which she learned of Mrs. Walker in her youth. "She was tender-hearted. When the work was badly done she would say to us little girls, 'Child, child, sit down!' — and we liked that. Mrs. Bushnell was kind too — ah, Mrs. Bushnell! And when the work was badly done we must always do it again for Mrs. Bushnell. When we grew older we knew that she was right. Mrs. Bushnell taught us to work!"

And Sarah, ironing Miss Nassau's dress while she talks to me, dreams over the days when Miss Nassau was a young woman on Corsico Island. On that account we sit still for a little. The sound of the tide comes in at the open door and the flowers in the little garden run from the sea wind. Everywhere in the open is the exceed-

ing brightness of day; and I think of how, in America, God has laid a hand upon Mrs. Bushnell's eyes.

There are very wicked women among the Mpongwe, and there are saints, too, — I feel the quaintness of this word and its difficulty. But there is a sort of woman for whom it is just a common term — who must be so called or lack a name; I mean kind old women who have befriended others; who have smiled so long out of their kind eyes that there is a perpetual glimmer of smile in the ultimate dimness; who have moved so softly about the sick and dying that they come down the village street as still, in their bare brown feet, as evening air. In the gardens of their minds righteousness and peace grow together, with many homely healing herbs for the wounded of their people. Some such have I seen in the village about Baraka, which is pretty much of a heavenly vision in the eyes of a missionary from Ngumba.

July 12.

You will be glad, since you care for my comfort, to know that we are pleasantly housed at Baraka. We live in an old house, among the scattered Mpongwe villages. Three miles of a road that follows the shore of the Gaboon Es-

tuary brings us to Libreville, one of the largest of the West Coast settlements. Here are over one hundred white people, and more than twenty women. These are French people, and some English traders. I cannot hope to give you a sense of how metropolitan we feel ourselves to be. Indeed, I think that only a "bush" person like myself experiences the full flavor of our excessive urbanity.

The Mpongwe people themselves are extraordinary in their grace and finish. Who can say for how many generations they have been in contact with the trader, and the American mission was busy among them as many as seventy years ago. They are people of a fastidious instinct, the nicest sort of instinct for true gentility; and there is nothing grotesque in their very modified aspect or in the modifications of their manner of life. Many of these old Christian women have an air of distinction for which one can hardly account — quite the "grand manner"; and the women of the tribe generally are graceful with a grace not at all primitive, — a sophisticated, almost a morbid, grace. There has been, and there continues to be, a mingling of races here, so that we have to do with many mulattoes, little mulatto children in the school, poor pretty mulatto girls who want to be good

against all the tides of their blood. Nothing is simple here, goodness least of all.

Well, my dears, I am to remain here. The Fords have no immediate intention of going home, and one must approve the earnestness of their devotion to this place, which must be closed if they go. And as for me, I shall go in for the work with all the heart I can bring to it. I don't know what the work means, what it may come to mean; it is foreign to me. But I must manage to put myself into it somehow, and then we shall see.

July 27.

This afternoon I studied the language; and then I looked up and saw our settlement on its ridge rising between the sea and the sweet rolling country, and everywhere the light of the late afternoon. This place is not magic or strange, but extraordinarily rural, — yes, even magically rural. The street that runs by the water, and the street back of this and upon the higher land of Libreville, — with its little houses under the great mango trees and trees of strange blossoms and palm trees, the little houses painted brightly and standing in bright flowers, — are rural but not in any common sense; there is a strangeness. There is no sugges-

tion of the forest, but there is a suggestion of the primeval animal. I think this is as true as if the town, with its little streets beneath its great trees, were the jungle, and the poor pretty yellow girls that look at you from under the thatched eaves were leopardesses. There for generations the animal passions of men have been exceedingly busy, and everywhere is the melancholy of license. Don't tell me that all the white men whose children run naked in the streets were minded to father such broods. I suppose the air of this place is heavy with self-disgust and a thousand remorses — a thousand thousand. This is an old settlement.

Baraka, July 29.

I am conducting a French examination in the little schoolhouse. About seventy scholars come regularly, but to-day one class of six is held for examination. They are writing tensely with their chins above their slow hands. The eldest may be thirteen; there is one girl in the crowd. The teacher, Joseph, speaks better French than I do — and is handsomer too. He is very much in the flower of youth — the son of a woman still comely in her sixties.

For the minute the yoke of the French verb is heavy. From outside there come in sweet airs

by the six windows and the open doors. We see the gray water and the green trees moving in the wind, and the sunny places where the mown grass is bleaching and where Igue, the evangelist, is washing his clothes. He is our preacher, and a very timid person; he was a slave, and is perhaps of dwarf origin.

There are twenty-eight girls in the school. Six of these are mulattoes or the children of white men and mulatto women. One is like a flower — her grace is excessive; some of the black ones are handsome, with a more robust and happy charm.

July 31.

Another examination — of the seniors, eight in number. One is a mulatto girl. We are bound to take them seriously if we take their race seriously. They read in French well enough — with a soft slur. Any one who doubts that Rodin's "Thinker" is thinking should look at the feet of these poor children: all the tenses of the verb *aller* are trodden out of the wine-press by their feet.

September 10.

The prettiest dress of the Mpongwe woman is a cloth drawn up under the arms, a scarf on

the shoulders, and a handkerchief folded over the coiled hair in a high stiff fold set well up on the head, rather like a child's idea of a crown. There is a great fancy for purples and lavenders set off with shades of rose and red and a sudden keen note of gilt. With black there will be a touch of most delicious bright green. A cloth and a scarf worn by a woman of beautiful gesture — and a Gabonnaise is always that — have a certain mutable charm; the movements of the body, the wind that blows from the sea, — these renew and display the folds of the garment so that the eye is intrigued.

There are two women, mother and daughter, who wear dresses of a type all by themselves. You would think the mother must be old, but she does not look so; Ntyuakero's widow she is — he who was the minister here and who died of the sleeping sickness. Her name is Osuka. She is a slight woman with a thin, thoughtful face, and a look of tender brooding and that fixed sweetness which is so often — perhaps always — a fruit of sorrow. When I go to see her, she comes from the spring — where she washes — in her straight black dress, with her black handkerchief above her little thin face; and as she sits under the eaves of her house, smiling at her guest, I see her a type — she is so much a

widow, so much the little hard-working bereft woman who cries before she sleeps at night in her lonely house.

Her daughter is Joseph's wife, and that is to be proud and happy. She dresses very sweetly, in lavenders and rose colors, falling rather scant on her thin young body except for a sort of congestion of gathers between the shoulders. Anyuregulé braids her rather long hair in little braids; these fall straight and thick from under the stiff folds of her handkerchief down her temples and beside her delicate cheeks, with an effect of something angular and Egyptian, very stimulating to the imagination. She is good and happy, opulent, quite cheerfully vain, I fancy; and yet, in her slight face, that is so gracious and so sweetly young, there is a shadow of latent melancholy — the daughter of Osuka's melancholy.

I write this out because I want to try to make you see it, my dears, so that things will begin to be real to you a little. I wonder if the house is real, — the little old house under its thatch, with cocoanut trees standing high about it, rustling in the wind, and other denser trees, — a cinnamon tree at the back; the flamboyant tree putting out its first great red blossoms between the house and the church; the breadfruit

trees with their gross leaves and their great green globes; the swaying, crowded plumes of the bamboo between us and the water? So many missionaries have sat in this same room, and have gone their many ways.

September 16.

At two o'clock of an afternoon at Baraka Station the twenty-nine little girls will be in the work-house. The wind from the sea will be rushing in between the upright bamboo poles of the walls, and shafts of yellow daylight will be falling on the brown clay floor. There will be the sound of the tide in the Gaboon Estuary from down the hill and across the meadows. On the three long tables, that Mr. Hickman made from broken boxes, the work will be spread out. On the first, clean linen, washed out under the eaves, and dried in the extreme sunlight, and brought in to be mended. At the middle table there will be ironing and beyond this the sewing.

Sara, the matron, presides over the mending, in her blue dress, brown feet thrust into slippers, filling her end of the room with the comfort of her presence, her true goodness, her kindness, — that *something* which tempts one in weak moments to weep on her shoulder. Ma Sara is

not very firm; every culprit has a chance with her. Anyuregulé directs the little girls at the ironing-board. She is the wife of the school-teacher — Ma Sara's daughter-in-law — and mistress of the laundry.

The sewing-table is at the end of the room beside the platform. Part of the platform is enclosed as a storeroom; the walls of the enclosure are whitewashed and the door is painted a delicious vivid green. There is a green box seat on the platform, and above this the window opens to the mango trees, and the fall of the hill and the meadows, and the line of houses by the sand, and the estuary, and Parrot Island far away like a purple stain on the silver of the water. Mrs. Ford sits by the window directing the sewing. This is a tame phrase for the passion of her performance. She is calling up Industrial Work out of the empty places. Like Wotan, she holds mysterious councils with the earth; and she is deeply wise about fiber plants. But to-day she is overseeing the making of many-colored coats out of patches — for our friends send us patches, little patchwork cloths and big ones, too; all that end of the room is bright with patches.

Out of the brilliant cotton stuffs to be had in this country the little girls make dresses and

coats with pockets. Mrs. Ford hopes that we may find a market for certain typical Gaboon work — red and white appliqué, and bedspreads of typical violent combinations of red, white, blue, and yellow, dear to the hearts of the Mpongwe. Says Ma Sara, "the designs are finer than formerly." This is progress on the West Coast.

Aworé comes in with white linen in her arms that are round and brown. She and Anyuré are perhaps fifteen, and are permitted to keep their hair when the younger girls are shorn. They are no longer children; already they move with the excessive grace of the Gabonnaise. Their hair is parted from the forehead to the nape of the neck and twisted in coils above the ears. These young girls have a great pride of appearance, I never saw either of them disordered; and to see the slim Anyuré, — who is a mulatto, — in her scant pink dress, the shadowy coils of her hair dark above the little oval of her face, is to smile and sigh.

There are perhaps six mulattoes, and others, I suppose, who have forgotten strains of white blood; for this is an old settlement — we live on the forest's edge, but we are not a forest people; we are "The Wise Ones" — wise for generations — with the knowledge of good and evil.

As I write, the children fold away the clean linen and the sewing; it is four o'clock. They will work in the open — planting in their gardens, or cutting the quick-growing grasses — until sunset. Then will come the evening meal, which will have been cooked and will be served by those of their number who are the cooks for this week. There will be for supper broiled dried fish and cakes of cassava, the inevitable *kank* or bread of this African world. In the bright evening air the little cooks will place the nondescript plates and the marmalade jars that serve for water. (Too bad that you cannot know how grand this is.) The little girls will sit on the benches by the tables; they will ask a blessing, all murmuring together words that I do not yet understand. By now it will be dark — with the sudden dark that leaps out of the east on this country. The lanterns burn above the feast; the little girls laugh and talk and squabble. Presently each will spread her grass mat on the floor of the sleeping-room, each will wrap her in a cotton cloth, and lying down she will sleep.

Mrs. Ford will lie down to sleep, too, but first must be thinking — if only she could produce fiber! Or, will there be a chance to sell baby clothes at mission meeting if the girls make them? And many other exciting speculations

she entertains. But if it is Saturday she will think, I suppose, that her twenty-nine little girls — only two of whom are fifteen and most of whom are no more than ten — have washed for the household; have cooked for themselves and some thirty boys; have sewed for themselves and for sale; have dug and planted; have thanked God for what they have eaten; and now lie safe asleep under a sure and decent shelter in the midst of many dark and terrible things. She must think of those other girls who have gone out in former times to establish permanent families and who come sometimes to see her whom they call mother; and she must think also of those others who went out and may not come back for shame, — she thinks of those with tears, and prepares for them a place of repentance. For they do often have such need.

Here is the end of my letter and nothing about reading, writing, or other such mystic arts — which yet the little girls practice. But Mrs. Ford's obsession of industrial work is a domination. I have been too wrought upon to write of anything more esoteric; and somehow I think that to earn the *kank* one eats is more tremendous and more adventurous than to read or write a recipe for cooking it.

September 17.

I see that I am much needed here. The young Scotch trader, Martin, when he leaves of an evening, says that he "will be getting down the road," and if I will be just getting down the road there will be plenty doing. I begin to have a little Mpongwe — enough to make love with; I begin to know poor simple bodies — the old — the sick — the bereaved; I begin to have greetings from under the eaves of the houses — and friendly waving of arms. Yesterday I sat with three women in a little hut as neat as wax; there were little stools on the earth floor, and a little fire that made bright lights on some china dishes that were set out on leaves, to receive the food that was cooking in a little iron pot. One of the women was an albino, looking at me sweetly out of her poor pink-lidded eyes; the other two were black. I said, "I am out hunting friends," and they told me, with a kind of eager gravity, "You will find them. O bé denga!" It was so kindly said that I was happy. I feel reassured and more myself. What looks to be a case of sleeping sickness has developed in one of our families lately — a child, who used at first to give me her hand, looking at me out of heavy eyes, but whose little spirit is too weighed down with heaviness in these last days

to look out of the body at all. This is sad and dreadful to see. She has the characteristic symptoms — the swellings, the untimely sleep, especially the sleep that comes with the act of eating.

September 24.

When I was here three years ago there was a Frenchwoman from the Ogowé very ill; she died later in France. Her husband is here now for a little rest, which he very much needs, poor fellow; he is in a great state of nerves. For all his nervous manner he is interesting, often looking at one with that attention which is one of the marks of an open mind. He is argumentative, too, but about vital matters, so that one is willing. He reminds me of Italians I have known, — not in surface aspect, but in construction and in manner. He is from La Drôme. I am glad he is here, though it pains me to note his extreme nervous tension.

September 30.

The Frenchman is still here. I shall miss him when he goes, because he talks about anything that I please to have him, and lets me talk, too.

Different tribes of birds speak different dialects outside; the boys call out to one another

at work; the mangoes hang in pale yellow clusters down the foliage of the great trees; sometimes one nearest ripe falls with a soft thud; always there is the sound of the surf, that is less and more and less again, but never still. I feel a sweet laziness in the last recesses of me, and that is good to feel. Almost always here I feel like working out a salvation of my peace, as if I were constrained to create something dynamic in this place of sleep and evil dreams.

October 7.

The night is so magically lovely that you wonder why Henry James writes as he does. Has every one the sense that every moonlight night — every single one — must hold some wine of a particularly personal happiness or be accounted waste? The thwarted ego, with lip on the empty glass, would bite a piece out of the rim. I hope this pleases you — I write like this because I have just learned how; but it does n't seem natural yet, and I must still laugh.

The Frenchman — I mean the missionary — is quite extraordinary. He says he is a workman, but that may be just a modern form of brag. "L'ouvrier," he says, "est si peu interessant," that I must not so much as think of him. Under his helmet, his mocking face, with

a beard like a big *T* across it, is most amusing; but at night, standing before me in the middle of the big room he talks of sad and terrible things with furious gestures: of old age that rots and rots, of renunciation that is fruitless, of the inexplicable dealings of God with the appalled and bewildered soul — until I hang dizzy over the edge, and the other missionaries — but no; it is, it seems, a game for two. They have no part in "our panic, our pangs, and our doom."

October 14.

The days go like this: I need n't get up much before seven, so I don't. Breakfast at something like a quarter past, and after this prayers, — I mean personal, white man's prayers; and we take turns. By half-past eight I am in school. I look after the two advanced classes. I have divided them, and Joseph with an apprentice assists me. The advanced class studies in the afternoon, and I have nothing to do with afternoon sessions; Joseph and Mr. Ford attend to them. I have six little assistants who manage the lower classes, each in his own fashion, which is only in a measure modified by mine. There must be about fifty little codgers, boys and girls not much in love with school and not quick in

beginning, — in which they differ from the Bush people, — but quite surprisingly intelligent.

We struggle along until noon, not so badly. The little teachers love to beat the little scholars, but they are not let. Teaching comes to be a dull business. These are my six assistants: Kidney, grandson of an English sea captain, and about sixteen, I should fancy, — slow and sad, not at all a virile type, quite a mulatto type; Madiba, a Benga boy, good stuff, about fifteen; Mbueke, a little younger and too, too clever, — after all, he may be no more than twelve. His teaching is a series of barks — you would say an exasperated collie herding silly sheep. Alexander, so lazy that I can't afford to write about him; Japoma, who teaches mystically, all knowledge a whispered secret. I never caught him in the act; he floats with his class in a windless calm; I can't fancy how the transfer is effected, but of a Friday, when they are called up to deliver, they open their little hands and there is the button. Then there is Rebieno. These last two cannot be twelve years old. Rebieno controls and teaches thirteen children; he would love to knock them about, and missing this, he bullies them by sheer mental force. He is small and some of them are bigger, some older, but he quietly and systematically grinds them down.

Driving them to the water, he holds them under until they come up with a jolly good mouthful, and they need n't gasp either. Out of the tail of his astute eye he measures my approval or disapproval, and he can change tack without order. His eye on me is not a sly one; it is the eye of a truly clever, disinterested, ruthless subordinate. This is my teaching force, and sometimes I call sweet Anyuré, who is a member of this class and whose little womanly presence diffuses something very tender and refreshing to ease your friend's sense. This is the school.

We read French as soon as we know all our letters, and Mrs. Ford has evolved a thoroughly practical system. We come to be quite glib, and would compare very creditably with a class of French peasantry in certain respects: not in speaking French, of course; but hardly any one in the world can write as beautifully as some of us do. Only, here is none of the passion for learning which trembles in the bush hearts, nor any hungering and thirsting after God. Quite like a school at home. The matter of age makes an element of the difference; one could not look for such ardors in such young hearts; but neither do the young men in this place seem to care. You can think if this would make a difference to missionaries! These are the things I think

about more and more, and with less and less tranquillity. When I go to bed at night, I think, "To-morrow something must happen"; and every day I think this more and more until the thought and the desire for the bush work is being crowded by the will to make good here.

November 8.

To-day I went to see an old Christian who lived as far on the other side of Libreville as we do on this side. Hardly any one was stirring in the settlement as early as half-past three. I went by the sea, under cocoanut palms that have never killed any one yet, though they might as well as not, — out onto the point where Ngeza lives in his house that is more than thirty years old. A plank house to which Ngeza must climb by steps which must be steep to his old bones. He was looking through his glass at the German steamer just in. Lots of beautiful nets hang on his veranda. In his house it is cool and dusty; mirrors, of course, on the walls — one clear and still gilt, the other gray and the frame sad with years — these reflect the dark old floor and the slim-legged chairs that begin to lose their stuffing through their leather covers. The sound of the sea is always in that house, and the soft passing of the sea wind. Many

things we spoke of, but most of Mr. Murphy. A missionary, my dears, long since gone back to America, but of an eloquence it seems and a goodness not to be compared. So that at this end of the long day Ngeza can only sigh and say, "Murphy was Murphy"! "Now," says Ngeza, in the sad fashion of old men, "there are so few of us left — God knows best. But at night, when I think of the people of Gaboon and that the soul is so small in their eyes, I weep — at night on my bed." I listen to this and understand it. Murphy, it seems, should have stayed; Ngeza says so. Presently we kneel down and Ngeza prays — none of your personal familiar addresses, but ascriptions of praise to the Almighty and pleadings for mercy. His voice fills the old house.

Going home I meet all sorts of people, — nuns I meet — as many as ten, some young sweet little ones — and they return my salutation in friendly fashion, which is the first time ever they did, poor dears. Two ladies I meet in a dog-cart — young women with thin dark faces and a careful prettiness — they do not salute. Many men I meet and they salute. I salute no matter who — I am sick of the lack of humanity here, and glad because the nuns were friendly to-day.

November 11.

To-day being Wednesday I was taking the little girls for their bath in the sea. We were winding along the path across the meadows, with the busyness of ants and the gayety of grasshoppers, when we came to water in the way; then you should have seen my little procession of ants scatter and run frantically about — all to preserve their precious larvæ; I found that I was the larvæ. Dubious consultations about "Mademoiselle" and her good shoes, until Ngya — a most practical young person of perhaps twelve — tucked her dress about her waist and came to me. "I am going to carry you," says Ngya in a rather severe and bullying tone, and turned her back. Perhaps they are more loving than one would guess. Such play as they have on the beach, such frolicking of little brown bodies and little yellow bodies. If one were here for just the pleasure of letting go with them, it would be fun. But one is here so necessarily for discipline — that being the greatest service one can do them. Coming home the stronger ones did, indeed, carry me over puddles, on a chair of crossed hands, and there were great giggles because "Mademoiselle" was so light.

November 15.

Yesterday, in the late afternoon, I went to see Ekandé, a little cozy woman who is always busy by her open door. A mat will be spread on her clay floor and from her knees her bright-colored sewing falls onto the mat. Last evening we talked together — she was going with me a piece of the way home — about her son that was born twenty-five years ago. His father, she said, was a Dane, once a sailor, but in her day a trader. He took her away from Gaboon to Kamerun. They lived together seven years; he spoke Mpongwe. She was happy with him, she said. "White men are kinder to us than our Mpongwe men." Then he went away with the little boy; they were to have come back but never did. Now she is married to Magago, who is, I suppose, less kind. One of the French missionaries here, who was a trader before he became a missionary, says that the white men become very sincerely attached to their black women. I understand that, and I understand, too, that a black woman may gain by such a connection; but no one has explained to me yet how a Caucasian — with his racial prejudice in favor of the purity of his women — can cheerfully breed daughters of whom he may never hope that they will be chaste. Another thing,

the black woman under contract to a white man continues to bear black children. The white men are obliged to submit to this, which a black man of this tribe need not tolerate. A black husband — well, never mind. This is not a particularly simple business.

Now I begin a little to get beneath the manner here. A few days ago I saw a little child with the sleeping sickness, — further gone than when I saw her last, poor little girl, — sleeping under a blanket, her little limbs sprawled out. In her waking moments she suffers mute fears; she may n't say what she fears, only her frightened eyes hunt and find. Is n't it too sad!

February 5, 1909.

Such excitements! To-night we took the little girls fishing. At some seasons of the year the women fish with torches — wading thigh-deep in the water and spreading a cloth between four of them for a net. For such a grand bat as this the little girls started out with lanterns and a great clamor under the moon. We were to catch as good fish as there are in the sea — and yet none thought to bring a basket for the catch. So we borrowed from a cottage on the beach a brass kettle — a big one, of course. Clothes were shed like dead leaves — the lanterns danced

above the water — groups of little girls rose and fell in the lights held high by others — shrill heralds ran up the beach to tell us that there were fish to be had. There was all the agitation of a great slaughter, and when at last Mrs. Ford blew her whistle and the lights came slowly up the beach, we must look in the kettle, — two little minnows and some seaweed! Everything can be accounted for, and this is the way to account for the good fish that are still in the sea.

From where I scribble in my room, that is open every way but one, I hear the little girls scrapping as they go to bed. Still, it was a pleasant party.

February 9.

This morning I woke when the day was still dim and strange. The people in a town a quarter of a mile away had been dancing all night, and the sound of their drumming was curiously deliberate in the dawn. I have never heard this rhythm before, — sad, my dears, to break the heart, desperate and deliberate at once. A measure of three, then two, then three, the last three falling away from the even deliberation of the first two measures, with a movement toward abandon — a very curious and disquieting ef-

fect. One wonders what was the dance, after the long night of dancing, at that disillusioning hour and to that cynical rhythm.

To-morrow I will have my letters; for that I am happy. Yesterday little Jana, the child with the sleeping sickness, died, and that was well. To-day I was with the poor weary mother, and she thanked me sweetly for the times I had come to see her. Was n't that touching of her? The last time I saw the child she was lost to childish semblance; but a matter of two weeks ago I happened in while her mother was rubbing her with oil. She was sleeping, her little face an untroubled young mask, and the long angular lines of her young body very sweet and touching. Two women moved her about; she had little sudden rigors, gestures of angular childish grace.

I beg your pardon if it is wrong to talk about this. But it was extraordinary to see a human creature so lost as an individual, so lost to the senses, so unresponsive, and so much at peace, so like a faint drawing of a little child on an Egyptian wall — and still beautiful.

February 28.

Here is the beginning of a letter to my family, at the close of a Sunday, after I had come in

from a visit with Owango Ingo, poor little creature, who cried into her dress because she wants to be good and yet evil is present with her. She loves her husband, and he pretty well spoiled her, with chains for her neck and gold rings for her fingers and carpets everywhere in her plank house and a forest of velvet furniture on the carpets. She is a little person, very black, with large eyes and a pointed chin. He has other wives. She thought lately that she was losing him, so she went about making a charm. Very wise people of this most gifted tribe gave her a magic lotion. She was to rub it on her little pointed face and so be irresistible. Her husband got word of the medicine-making, but not of its purport. He took it to be an injury, some powerful attempt on his well-being. So Owango Ingo is driven out. The affair comes to trial before King Morris and she is acquitted. The bottle is thrown into the sea. Owango goes back to the carpets and the furniture, but she cries into her dress because she has departed from good and followed after evil. "Satan," says she, quite without prompting, "is very powerful." This is by way of instruction to Mademoiselle, who cannot be expected to know, and who recognizes that poor little Owango speaks from an obscure and evil experience. One would not care to compete with

an Mpongwe woman along this line. The women of this tribe have a secret society of great power and influence where the men's secret societies have become obsolete, — the Njemba — and they are up to all sorts of devilment. Altogether the Mpongwe women who are not Christian are creatures of a black and sophisticated evil.

March 15.

I sat a long time this afternoon with Robbie Boardman, the blind Mpongwe man who is an evangelist to the Fang. He is back for a few days because his brother has just died. The Boardmans are not like any other family; they are long and lank and light-colored, with an instinct for the things of the white man and something like our mode of thought. Their mother or father, I can't think which, was an American negro. Tragic things must always be happening in the Boardman family; their weaknesses hang about them like shadows. The mother, an educated woman, died a drunkard, and Augustus, too, was a drunkard. But Robbie sits in the windy doorway of his sister Martha's cottage, laughing and chatting, his hands between his knees, and in the silence which he keeps while another speaks, his chin up, and the promise of a whistle on his face.

He seems just ready to whistle, the little soft whistle of a man at an intricate and satisfactory job, but he never truly whistles. Only, sometimes, when he is pleased with what you have said or with himself for having caught your thought, he laughs. His English is without effort and good. Mr. Wright says he is often despondent, and I should fancy that his sensibilities are overdeveloped.

When I went to see Oduka, a woman of the Shekiani and a mean person in the eyes of a true Mpongwe, in her little hut she sat at meat with her two little boys. Each had a bit stool, and on another stool between them were set out clean bright dishes, all in gaudy colors. Here were boiled plantains and red crabs quite mixed up and lost as to legs. In another dish there was a spiced gravy of wild mango nut. One boy gave me a stool and sat himself upon a bit of firewood, and I too had a bite to eat. So we live, you see, not without the dinner of herbs and some love withal.

March 16.

I feel — what you are often tempted to express — your dissatisfaction with my circumstance. And yet, my dears, take account of this: your friend actually insures the welfare of

a school of nearly eighty little children. What more would you ask for me, or I for myself, than that I should be so practically serviceable? Think once how I stand on a platform, like a personage. Little boys go to wash their hands to please me. And once, when a little boy was absent "because he had no cloth," I sent for him to come, anyway, which he did, a little jacket tied by the sleeves about his middle. This is power. When they cough I say, "You must stop coughing," and they do. When one has injured another I make him say, "Forgive me," which he hates to do, but does. And then I tell the injured party that he is unmanly, so that no one is too complacent or comfortable for long.

March 20.

Mr. Martin, poor dear, is ordered to a trading-post in the river, quite a lost place and "sunken from the healthy breath of morn." This makes us sad. But Mr. X. has taken his mulatto woman and his little children home, which is a great wonder. Now I can forget those little deep-eyed children that so grieved me.

They are boys, and that is better. It is the cross-breed girls who grieve me most, who are most adrift. The black men do not pick their

wives from these, who are too frail, they think, for hardy uses. They are bad investments. Where may they cast anchor, these poor yellow girls who drift between black men and white?

March 27.

Anyuré and Aworé walk and talk together in the moonlight; they talk secrets, as they should. Anyuré's little head is flower-like; she carries her chin high and looks about her with smiling eyes. Aworé is very dark and, of late, womanly; she is pretty, too. To-night in the moonlight I see some silver beads on her neck; they quite shine. Her black dress is figured with gay flowers; her hair comes down from under her flowered kerchief in close-set, stiff little twists. These young girls seem very dear and sweet to me; I would like to be intimate with them. But I am not intimate with any one but Miagomori and we keep this intimacy a secret. Little Miagomori, — who must always hitch up his trousers when he stands to recite — one should be grateful, I suppose. He is perhaps nine years old; he smiles more than is reasonable and this distinguishes him. I took care of him the day his little sister was buried; that is, I found him in the rear of the procession to the grave, dragging reluctant feet and

terribly oppressed. I took him by his little cold hand and led him away out of the valley of the shadow. That was the beginning of our intimacy, as holding of hands has been before now.

March 29.

Mr. Martin is not to go to the trading-post up river, as seemed likely. I am glad. When I think how men are cast away here, and why, I am sick, — when I think of young Pierce at his lonely post between Cape St. John and Benito, walking his veranda at night because he cannot sleep; and of Mr. Barrow, who told me that, in the times of his troubles with the Spanish officials at Eloby, he used sometimes, from very loneliness and desolation, to weep. He looked for me to explain a thing so extraordinary.

April 4.

Sometimes, when Mr. Martin comes in at our supper time, I try to note in him — for you — what there is that so pleases and refreshes us, but I can't fasten it. Only there comes in with him some breath of honest old-country living, customs and modes of thought, canny old phrases, Scotch crotchets, — and all this through the medium of ruddy radical

youth. It is beautiful to see how perfectly he has the racial gift of non-committal. "I'll not be caring if I do," says young Martin in the limit of acquiescence. I never hear him tell a tale of a crooked deal — and there are many such tales — but that closes in this fashion, "Well, I won't be saying that I might n't do the same myself — but I won't be saying that I am a rogue neither." He has a passion for claiming every worker of iniquity for a brother, but he will not be written down a rogue. I cannot tell you how many times young Martin has turned on us a lowering young face that waits on our word that he is no rogue. He had no home letters on the last steamer and he has cast his family off — quite a feat, since there are hordes of them.

April 8.

My dears, I salute you. Is it well on the top of the world where you live? There will be blossoms there on familiar trees that are green, above rivers that are better than all the waters of this estuary.

Yet here there is a great blessing and gift — it is the gift of vision. Being well out of the woods one sees the forest, and you; and the "happy highways" where you go shine plain

and clear to me. On moonlight nights like these, when the world hangs all bright in the firmament, I see you on the gilded half, the very heart of all that fire and light. You can surely never see yourselves so. It is truly a fine sight, worth a penny a peep, and as good as an Easter egg with a glass end.

I begin to be almost glib in Mpongwe.

April 10.

The French steamer, with her pompous entry, makes me sick. You would suppose from her fashion of ploughing up the whole estuary, and her swelling way of coming to anchor, that she must be out of breath with news, but no, she can't produce more than you could carry in a leaf.

April 17.

Great excitements to-day — Mrs. Good arrived and the Johnsons! And imagine that after her long absence Mrs. Good still speaks Mpongwe.

April 20.

To-day in a village a little girl was very friendly to me — nay, more. She asked me to marry her. She was perhaps five years old; she had on a little dress in my honor, but it did n't

button. She discovered very much about me in a very short time — a gold tooth well back in my mouth because I was so indiscreet as to laugh. She asked me, Had I borne? and I said, No, I had never borne, but went about the towns hunting other women's little children. She asked me, in a most searching manner, Did I love them? An extraordinary question from such a source. She patted me with her little hand and said she would marry me. Presently, a neighbor coming into the yard, she put her face to a crack in the railing about the veranda and called out, "You must see this white person who has come with a hat and an umbrella." Funny little black baby!

Ntyua, June 20.

We left Baraka on Friday at ten, in the little sailboat Evangeline. A dead calm all the afternoon, and our men rowing through the still gray world, though now and again a school of fish made its multitudinous commotion. Five Fang we had for crew, and my little Osala who was much awed by the world and his travels. He is a Shekiani and not at all self-assured. I had explained that, if I permitted him this journey, he might find himself in a way to starve and must be prepared to do so pleasantly. He

said yes, he would. The part of Spartan youth, for which, as you see, he had signed, was early called for. Food was short at Baraka, and Osala came aboard with none. When presently a Fang passed him what could be spared of his own portion, little Osala held back a long time — there was no mention in the bond of saving kindnesses.

Before we left the bay for the dim alleys of the creeks, it was night. I never cease to wonder at the phosphorus — that most delicate and splendid and supernatural glory that plays about a boat in these waters. With that soft throbbing glitter about us and a string of stars above, we threaded the narrow waterway where sometimes there was a line of light, and more often none. About nine o'clock we came upon Ntyua — most extraordinarily metropolitan after our dim passage through the mangrove swamp. Two lanterns in Ntyua made bright shaken lights across the flooded flat before the town. We blinked. Some young bucks made a brave music with accordions, and from all the youth of Ntyua you would say there rose a murmur of laughing voices. It was disconcerting to come out of the sleeping wilderness upon so much light and music and laughter.

Presently we were in a narrow street, very

regular, eaves of the houses fairly high and supported on sapling pillars. Here, perfectly, was that mediæval aspect which so strongly characterizes a Fang town. Women came to peer at us by the flare of pitch torches — forest people with bits of weather-worn cloth about their loins. At the door of his house, Robbie Boardman, the blind Mpongwe who is the evangelist in this town, waited for us to take his hand. Most of the houses are of bark and in a continuous row; his is of bamboo, detached, and has three rooms. Into this house we went with our bed-bags, big water-bottles, lanterns and boxes, — all the usual truck. After us piled in the populace to stand with folded arms. *I* was thinking: no headdresses to speak of, no tattooing, but, upon the face, lines of black paint, sometimes red. *They* were thinking — eh, what were they thinking? Soon I was asleep on a high bedstead, native-made, grass spread on the boards for a mattress. For this is an Mpongwe house.

Robbie is not an ordinary sort of black man; he thinks quite consecutively. Of a haughty tribe, he serves the Fang, so far as I could see, humbly and freely, his poor patience marred a little by self-pity.

On Saturday came people from neighboring

towns, women mostly. We could very much love one another if we were given any sort of chance. They understand my Bulu talk a little, better than I understand their Fang. So we spent several days. In the evening we would sit with Robbie and Izure, talking in English of many things new and old. Sunday we had Communion in the little bamboo hut that is the church. There were present something like fifty. A lad and a woman were received into the church, and three young Fang bucks publicly confessed their sins and were received back into membership; a woman did the same. These people are far away and out of sight in the forest; they wander about and often there is none to save. The women from a distance wanted me to go home with them to teach them, a most wistful expression of a desperate need.

Monday morning we left for Ayol, a town up another of the waterways. It was noon when we struck the mud flat in front of a town where we left our boat. All our stuff was carried over that waste of mud to the town. Everywhere in the heat and sunlight, mud and brown water and mangrove trees were still and secret. Presently we were off in a little canoe: five Fang, little Osala, Mr. Wright, and myself very quiet on the box of the Communion service. From

the wide river-way the canoe turned into a narrower, and from that into the very heart of the swamp. Green trees crowded us, from mud all about, little crabs as bright as Joseph's coat came out to see us pass; they waved rosy claws at us. The end of the water journey was a run into a mud bank; our boys drew the canoe as far as it would go, then carried us to solid ground, where, out of the green swamp gloom, forest emerged. An hour we walked through what I took to be a second growth, and then, to my surprise, we were in Ayol. I was not the only surprised woman in Ayol. There was a head, and more, at every door. Ayol is more primitive than Ntyua. In the house where I sat, people came and went to look at me. In the big, disordered house of an old Christian I made a cup of tea, while Mr. Wright was busy with the church session.

The catechist's wife is a sweet girl who was trained at Baraka, a most efficient and important little person, with all the marks of a minister's wife. She reads the Bible. This little Fang girl made many efforts to make me feel at home. And on a bit stool beside the fire among the eager forest women, her visitor was very much at home — a little fire began to leap in her heart. We had Communion in a poor little hut. The

Christians brought their stools and sat about. In the hour, they had made what preparation they could — a new cloth, a new handkerchief. We were perhaps twenty-five people, a very simple company. I am thinking it was a true Communion. To me it was so. Afterwards a girl came crying to me; they were telling her to wait for baptism until another Communion season when she would be more established as a Christian. I comforted her as I knew how.

At five we left Ayol; it was up to us to get into the river before dark. We hurried back to our canoe; the tide had risen so that it was afloat in pleasant water. It was dark when we landed at the town where our stuff waited. This was a wild place. I had never before seen a town where I would fear to be alone. Here they had been drinking; men thronged the narrow way between the houses; the uproar while we ate, in a hut crowded with trade boxes, quite wore upon two people who had fared so far since early morning. Finally, Mr. Wright went out and called them down. By the light of wandering lanterns, we got packed again and away into the cool night.

The Evangeline is a poor boat for night travel; no proper place to lie down. Poor Osala all but dropped overboard in his lurching sleep. Old

Izure — so like a grand vizier in the "Arabian Nights" — slept at our feet. We dozed as we could. The wind was favorable and it was not one o'clock when we turned in toward the lights at Hatton and Cookson's wharf. The sea had not seemed rough while we were sailing, but there was a heavy sound of surf. When the sail came down, Ndongo Nkoni said the water was bad. With that my heart sprang and raced. I never felt so sudden and unreasonable a terror. It was the night, I suppose, and sleep. We went alongside the wharf and could not make it; no use to try to land in the surf. We pulled away from the wharf and anchored for the night. My knees shook together, a most uncomfortable sensation. I lay on what I could find, in my sweater and rug, cold in the teeth of a wind from the North Pole, though Mr. Ford tells me it was a south wind. In the gray dawn we sat up, and by six were ready to try the landing which we accomplished. Mba Nkogo, when he helped pull me up on the wharf, is said to have murmured, *Mbamba minga*, — a fine woman, — because so light to carry.

July 7.

It was good for me to have been away; I have come back to school quite refreshed. I write in

school — Madoba is giving a dictation. *Bla*, says he; "*bla*," go all the little mouths; "*bla*," write all the little hands, wise grow all my little sheep writing "*bla*." André is my new assistant; I have given him my class of babies and he is lost and sad. Once before he was a teacher, and then he spent hours writing beautiful programmes in multi-colored inks. Now, I exact that he teach a letter a week to individuals. It is much easier to teach the alphabet to a class than anything less to individuals. But such are my whims.

All the two days at Ntyua, I was thinking about the Fang and the Bulu, for they are of the same stock. There will be often, among the Fang, a perfect faun type and more often a suggestion of the faun. The Bulu is more human. I saw an old woman asleep on a bed in one of the large, cluttered rooms which the Fang build — a room brown and full of brown shadows, hung with baskets and wooden platters, gathered peppers, great brown cakes of the *ndo'o* nut, and all manner of forest litter. This old woman lay asleep on a low pole bed beside a fire. She was naked, except for a bit of cloth, and she looked old beyond imagination. She was a little old faun — you never saw anything more perfect. She had everywhere about her

those little upward angles of lip and nostril, cheekbone and eyebrow, and little twirls of hair. But you will never see the like! In old times, the people say, there were many such who would be carried out of a fine day into the sunlight, but now, say they, the Fang die young.

August 31.

I am busy night and day now, my dears, with reviews in school, and at night I run about with a field-glass and give names to the stars. For this they come out as thick as rain; I look at one and at the other and I think, "Oh, beautiful! You are Vega! And you are Antares! And you, lovely one, are Arcturus! And you, who have most comforted me all these years, I know now why, because you are nearest the earth — you are the Alpha Centauri." So they go away with their names on their foreheads where you may see them any night after this. Only Alpha Centauri you will not see because it must stay by me. There has been a mighty conjunction of the stars and me. I suppose they have always been somewhere about. But one night at Lolodorf I saw them, my dears, and the vast commotion of the sky. They seemed very worshipful, but they had no names and like that it was easy to lose them. That is why I am giving

them names. And one by one they are to have little altars, and a little kid on every altar because I can manage this very well and not miss them — I mean the little kids. I feel as happy as any one with a new religion invented by himself and not inconvenient.

September 9.

Ma Sara is such a maternal person, — in the heat of any sort of emotion she is so graphic. She was telling me that she had heard that her young son Ogula wants to marry a young person called Owanga Ogowé, but not having heard it from himself she kept her own counsel. On Saturday she was working in her vegetable garden when along comes Ogula. A good deal of a rowdy he is, and not yet worthy of his mother, but she likes him, anyway. She was telling me about it.

"An' I wonder what my chile want say to *me*, an' I was jes' clean my plantain — jes' bend over like this clean my plantain, an' he stan' up straight by *me;* an' every time I move away he moves jes' little, *so;* but I never ask him; I think, he is my own chile — he must tell me himself. So bye mbye he tell me he goin' to marry Owanga Ogowé, an' I think, aha! so he tell me *himself!* an' I say, 'So now you goin'

to marry Owanga Ogowé, what about that other girl you was goin' to marry? An' why did you make your mother's heart turn to that other girl when you was not goin' to marry her, but goin' to marry Owanga Ogowé?' All the time I clean my plantain, jes' so, an' he stan' up straight by *me*. An' he say he can never marry that other girl — she fights all the time. He can't marry her. He say he was promisin' marry Owanga Ogowé ever since he was li'l' boy at school an' she was li'l' girl at school. An' I ask him, 'Then why you break your promise so long?' An' he say there was *another* young man. So I say, 'Very good; but you know the old Mpongwe fashion.' An' he say, 'No.' These young people forget the old fashion. I say, 'You must never go alone across the river to ask for Owanga Ogowé — they will laugh and say, "Oho — Ogula!" But one of our family will go ask her people for Owanga Ogowé. Then maybe it will be good.' So when I think of Owanga, in my heart I feel glad — because she is in the same church as my chile!"

I was enchanted with Ma Sara when she was telling me all this, — such a sweet little love-story, and herself the heroine, — because neither Ogula nor Owanga are any better than they should be; though they have a better chance of

being, I suppose, with so much goodness and mercy following them. Except by Ma Sara's faith, Ogula is not in the church at all. But she is always like this when she speaks of her children; their virtues are deposited with her, perhaps, and she should know best how rich they are.

September 22.

Here is the end of my letter. Mrs. Good is feeling very sad because we have word that her son will be indefinitely delayed — on the Kroo coast, where his ship, the Fanti, struck a rock. You can hardly imagine the excitement with which the Mpongwe wait the coming of young Good to this station, where both his father and his mother began their work.

October 18.

To-day I wandered down to the far end of our little holding. In among the trees by the fence some little girls were playing, — neighbors who had crept in under the wire and who had gathered a heap of ripe mangoes that had fallen upon our ground from a tree over the fence. One of these, a little ivory mulatto with sweet pale hair and gray eyes, was dreadfully startled to see me. She had a panic sense that the mangoes might, perhaps, belong to the white woman;

but she took courage and invited me, very sweetly and like a lady, to have some. She is a most lovely little creature, the child of a mulatto and an Englishman; a poor little waif, fading with anæmia. How can Englishmen, who would kill their legitimate children rather than see them corrupted, — how can they father little helpless girls like these who are bred to serve a trader's passing day!

The school improves wherever I concentrate. That is very satisfying and very tormenting; the little teacher cannot sit on all her eggs at once.

January 15, 1910.

This station is to be left, like Corisco, in the hands of the native Christians; the white people are to be withdrawn for the work in Kamerun.

These days we have all the air of being sold out — all the poor old duds of this poor old station are spread out under the sun in the yard, and our neighbors, black and white, inspect them. We live half in and half out of packing-boxes, with an eye out for the steamer, which will not leave for some time after arrival. This is a Sunday. All our relations with the people are melancholy now; their feelings are wounded, and that is sad to see, for they are good and true. They are not angry with us, but wounded.

Many good kind Mpongwe people I have seen burst out crying in these last days. They will be trying to speak reasonably and quietly, when suddenly they give way. This is painful to see, particularly in the old.

January 20.

Ma Sara, dear woman, was talking to me in the moonlight last night. The young people, she said, can never know how the old ones feel to see Baraka die. And that was a most pregnant expression, for the Baraka pillars were all hewn out of the rock of a certain period. "I jes' sit at my window," says Ma Sara, "and I jes' watch the people carry everything away. They tek away the grindstone, an' I jes' say in my heart it is an old friend is dead an' they tek him away; an' so I watch them tek away one, two, three, ten friends, — all those old things they buy an' tek away jes' like old friends that die an' they tek them away. I can't eat, Mademoiselle, an' I can't sleep. When the mornin' comes I jes' think one more day — our few days. Mademoiselle, young people don't know — maybe they think this is a small trouble."

It is really a hideous time, but has to be got through.

Part Four

THE HARVEST MAIL

Part Four

THE HARVEST MAIL

Lolodorf, February 5, 1910.

My dears, I write you at my old table, on the very same cracks. There against the wall is my little old fat chest of drawers, that still thrills me with a sense of actual opulence beyond any piece of furniture in the world. Last night, when I came into this room, I seemed to find myself and you, as I had found so many friends along the way, and happiness.

February 8.

You are to know about the journey hither from the beach. On Wednesday morning I left Batanga with two loads, and at Kribi I met Mameya and a man of the Mvele tribe with the Lehmans' jinricksha. The jinricksha is like a small dogcart, and under the hood of it I jogged along for four days, along a perfect highway between two painted forests; and all the old things were seen to have passed away. Mameya's little strong body trotted in the shafts; Nkot pushed behind; myself, I lounged

on the seat and pondered with a kind of degenerate homesickness on the past.

Where were the seven deaths to be met in the old way? Where were the swamps under their fathoms of green, and the hills which one climbed on one's face, and the perilous river crossings? All the sense of sweet intimacy with the forest has gone with the trail, and out of the terrific tumult of the building of the road runs this immaculate highway quiet in the sun. When I think of the uproar of the days and the outraged earth and the great cries of the falling trees and the enforced efforts of the forest tribes among the débris, I feel some lack of zest in the journey on the complacent highway. Yet it is a wonderful road and most creditable to those white men who camped along it. I suppose that they are well out of this by now, travailing in other forests, and glad not to have to live "on top of the paths" they have completed.

I had a most comfortable journey, though Mameya did pull in at night to miserable towns; because he had relatives among the townspeople, I suppose, and I don't know the towns on top of this new road. But we did very well. I was happy with my hands between my knees all the idle day. I had a grass mat that I would

spread out on the road or in a palaver house, and sitting on this, I would drink hot tea out of my thermos bottle, and the carrier would give me a piece of smoking yam on a little pointed stick. I did not take my tent, but slept in little bark houses. Only the long divide of Pikiliki was familiar. There the river talks the very same palaver among the rocks and the forest drops peace upon the highway, and there I had to walk.

It is easy to talk about the path, but when I think of telling you about the people, I can't begin. So many Christians greeted me on the highway. It did n't use to be so at all. But now I can't make any sort of time on a journey for friendly greetings, and for little gatherings of townspeople who call me to speak in the houses which they have built for God, little houses where they sit on logs and are immensely happy. I spoke in lots of such places, and lots of times I sat in my dogcart by the roadside and talked to the people. Once I was walking and in the shade of a tree I met a woman. She was a Christian, she told me, and held my hand and beamed upon me in a particular way they have. Presently she undid her head-covering, and out of the puffs of her hair she took a little coin — five pfennig — and this she gave me. I was

astonished, — at the money and at the spirit, — but I tried to be polite and to know just how to accept her five pfennig.

I was surprised, too, by the emotion with which my friends met me, trembling and with tears. At Lam, where a church has just been organized, Bian and Nshicko and old Mejio laughed and cried and held my hands. "We see your face again. Ah, Missa Makingia, this long time that we have parted, always we have prayed that we might see your face again. And God is willing. Did you forget us? Did you remember us? Do you remember how you said to us thus and so?" They put me in Bian's little clean brown house and there was to be no parting from me, they said, all that day. Still, it was allowed that Makingia had to bathe.

We had meetings, one in the church and one in the palaver house in the evening, by the wood fires. Lam is a big center now; five hundred come to the service of a Sunday. The church was organized perhaps a month ago, and it is curious to see how deeply mystical a sense of the fact of the Church in their midst the older Christians have. We gabbled a great deal all the sunny afternoon, and after the night came in among the palm trees in the village street. We were beautifully happy. After we

said good-night I heard Bian and Nshicko laughing together under the eaves of the house, and when I asked why, they said they rejoiced because of some "arguments" I had made in the meeting.

I arrived at Lolodorf at the end of a golden day. Mrs. Lehman met me about an hour out, and a little later down the road came those of the schoolboys who knew me, capering with flags; and some of them are young men that were little boys, and those that are still little boys are younger brothers! It was sweet to see them and I was happy. Bitum was quite silly with pleasure. He was sure that my men were going to spill me out of the cart, and he shouted staccato directions as he ran in front of the jinricksha, where he had to be nimble or perish.

Lolodorf has changed almost beyond recognition. But the house is the same and the Lehmans are the same, and I could not sleep the first night for old familiar thoughts that came upon me in my old room.

February 14.

I got here Saturday, as you ought to know if you read this serial with proper attention. And Sunday was very exciting. So many people came to church, and there is an addition on

the new church. The people built this church themselves — a huge roof over rows and rows of seats, and before the Lam church was organized there would sometimes be sixteen hundred people at service of a Sunday morning. Now there are services held in so many directions that the audiences here are smaller.

The morning after I came there were over seven hundred, and that day there was an ordination of elders. When I saw all those people, and so many of them my friends, — and when I saw two friends of mine (whom I taught to read) and another, stand to be ordained, and presently kneel on a bit of grass mat, — I wept from sheer enlargement of heart.

To-day Mrs. Lehman and I were in a town where often I used to go to see a woman who is a Christian now, a tall woman furiously tattooed. I always loved her, and now, when I sit in her house and think, "This little brown house is the house of a Christian woman, and that is Nkata," I feel the uses of the years.

She came in from her work, — cutting brush she had been, — and her body with its terrific mesh of bluish-black tattoo was wet with the dew. Mrs. Lehman was telling her that her little daughter, who is to be graduated with Mrs. Emerson's advanced class of girls, must

learn now from her mother the works of women — gardening and fishing and hunting of firewood and cooking. But Nkata, it seems, has the old golden maternal dream for her one little daughter. She unwound her bit of rag from a cut on her leg, — the scars of her profession, — and she said that Mban must not work as her mother does. The humanity of this was, of course, very touching, but we called up the shade of a future husband, who, for all his lack of definite feature, knew his own mind and how to drive little Mban to her duty, without any particular care of her shins.

February 16.

Out under the bright moon and bright Sirius and the worshipful Canopus, I have been talking with the boys the old palavers. After all these years — is the world really round as the white people say? They do not doubt, say they, but they wonder! And beyond the stars, what? Ah, what, indeed!

February 24.

I am here for a rest, which I was popularly supposed to need after the tearing-up at Baraka. In a day or two I leave for Efulen, where I am to work. Certainly I have rejoiced in my rest and in the companionship of all my old cronies.

Yesterday I spent in the neighborhood of the old site, and I tell you that Antæus did not know the only trick, for I, being clasped to many brown bosoms, was remade as good as new.

You know better than I do the statistics of the work here. But actually to see the symbol of numbers translated into life, with the face of a man you know, of hundreds of men you know, who once were afar off and now are truly of the tribe of God, as you know yourself to be, — this is very wonderful and very moving. All these years to have been praying, perhaps mechanically, "Thy Kingdom come," and then one day to see it coming, crowding up an old path that has been made straight and the way of the Lord!

Efulen, March 4.

I must tell you about my journey over from Lolodorf. It was a good journey. Dr. Lehman came with me to see the dentist, for Dr. Weber does us the great kindness of caring for our teeth. On Monday we left the jinricksha and struck off to the south for Efulen. I was in a hammock again for the first time these three years. Sometimes we stopped to eat — you can bank on that in my caravan. A grass mat spread in the shade, a little kettle boiling on a

friendly woman's fire, a cup of coffee and a loaf of bread, and now and again an egg. We bought eggs as we went. When we bought our first one the carriers asked me who would eat the egg, since we were two. "The woman will eat the egg," said I, "for such is the fashion of our tribe." Next we bought two more. And how were the eggs to be divided, asked the carriers, since the eggs were now three? "The fashion of our tribe is," said I, "that when there is but one egg the woman shall eat it, but of three eggs the man eats two." This amused them, and me, very much.

At something after four we went into real forest, and so in the cool of the evening climbed a great divide. Pretty stiff work. The sun had set when we came up into the town of Nkole Miel. Water from the spring, a fire in the street by the hut where I slept, a good little supper, and then the lovely, lovely night, with the moon golden among the trees at the end of the clearing, and Canopus and the Dog Star, how bright above the little brown huts!

We climbed into Efulen at one o'clock next day. There can be no two minds about Efulen, as there might be about a beautiful woman. Efulen is amazingly beautiful. The brown bark houses of this station, with their shaggy leaf

thatch, are on the top of an abrupt hill. This hill looks every way upon neighbor hills, and beyond these to others fainter and dimmer. The broken surges of the mountains here and there thrust the forest out of the level into the light of day. The green cover of the country is broken by terraced ranks of white trunks — great pillars with high crowns of foliage. In the mists, in the late and early lights, there is a magic everywhere like Turner's magic. And imagine this: there is not an hour of the day when there is a break in all this beauty. The top of the hill is small; the rise is sharp; one might sit on the edge of the clearing and dangle one's feet in the tops of the trees — almost.

From a missionary point of view Efulen is exciting. It is very nice for you that your missionary has been appointed to a station of which you may believe happy reports and of which she may speak without fear of exaggeration. There is here a great temptation to write in numbers, for the numbers come, and it is very moving to the missionaries to take count of, and to cherish, the sum of these poor bodies who come in from the thousand hills of a Saturday afternoon, — their babies and their food upon their backs, — who camp in the near towns or in the station guest-house, and who are sitting in church of a

Sunday morning two hours before the time. To us they are so real, so differentiated, so immensely worth while, and we want so much to express their reality and their worth to out-of-the-way people like yourselves, that we cast about for some sort of symbol that will carry, and we hit upon numbers. We hope, when we say that fourteen hundred people were in church to-day, that we have given you some sort of sense of what really happened. But the aspect of that forest people and the murmur that goes up from them, and the trouble of heart with which the minister looks at them, and the joy with which he looks at them, and the flooding of the hill with the tide of them until all the crannies in the missionary's personal privacy brim with them, — we can't think that numbers will give you a sense of this; and you might be much oppressed if they did.

March 7.

Ten women sit on the floor of my little room. We have come in from a meeting where we learned to say: "Behold me, I am a woman, Thy servant. Do with me as Thou hast said." We said this a thousand times over and over, and at the last we rejoiced in it. "It is a good word," we said, "and help is in it." When the

white woman supposed the meeting to be at an end, an old soloist took the stage and I tell you she made a hit. A middle-aged woman she was, with a white crash towel about her head and a bit of blue cloth about her loins; for ornament a safety pin hung at her neck. She spoke — and with more passion than I can tell you — of the oppression of women. She was a very finished speaker and she had a telling theme. As she spoke, one woman and another and many of those who listened rose and embraced her, with beautiful gestures and deep sighs, and presently staccato ejaculations, and then an uproar of common complaint. About that time, in any civilized country, some of us would have been run in; as it was, the white women broke up the meeting.

The women on the floor recount that I dress my own hair. I am, I overhear, of a peculiar cleverness. You should be glad of this.

March 22.

I am going about the big Bulu towns, among the magnetic Bulu women, the big strapping Bulu women that seem never too tired to go fishing, though they may have come in with firewood or from a long morning in a far garden. This is fishing season; to fish properly you must

hang a little basket down one side of your face, — a basket like a pint pot, — and the fish that you bring up with your net you put in this basket, and there you keep it very well until you have enough little silver fish to make a little stew for your family, when you come up out of the river, hang your net by its withy rim to your shoulder, with which Amazonian trapping — for the net is like a shield — and with the river water still bright on your Amazonian legs, you make for home.

I like it here better and better. And better than any other station in Africa so far. I like my comrades — Dr. and Mrs. Weber, Mr. Heminger and Mr. Reis. We laugh a great deal and I grow fat. The Webers are due for furlough after mission meeting, and I can't imagine how they will make out to man this station in their absence; they will think that they can't leave me here with no other woman, because I am unmarried.

March 30.

I have scribbled a sickening lot of letters — debts of honor — and now must close this. I am sleepy and a little peevish, and all on account of Halley's comet. Not that I have seen it. Listen to this foolishness! I told the school-

boys that the first to call me to see a most peculiar star, of a kind all by itself and not belonging at all to the common tribe of stars, should have a sixpence. Before the dawn, — says the unaccountable white woman, — and in the month of April, the boys are to look for this star.

Last night I could not sleep — wrote too many letters yesterday. The night wore on to morning before I slept. Before light there was a tapping at my door, and a boy voice, not very convincing, a rather timid voice, announced the star. "Is it a peculiar star?" groans your child from beneath the net. "Truly a peculiar star," says the herald, without enthusiasm. So I put my feet in slippers and my arms into whatever is handy and I go out to where the silly mournful bats are still whirring. Venus winks in the east. They say that planets do not wink — perhaps the temptation is seldom sufficiently strong. I tell you what I saw this morning before the dawn, when the moon was shining behind the house and Venus in the east, too beautiful to be entirely proper, and winking. She was so beautiful that I could not kill the little boy; I told him to go away. But I asked Mr. Reis to announce this morning in school that no one need find any more stars for Miss

Mackenzie, she would make her own astronomical observations.

Tell the children that I have a fine boy to care for me. His name is Obam, "Eagle." He is perhaps sixteen, with a strong body of a pleasant brown. A most awful giggler. Sometimes I think that I go to sleep to the sound of his giggle and wake up to it — perhaps that is the use of it, to wake me up. I asked him today, when he was scrubbing my floor, which work did he like best, to wash, iron, or scrub? He giggled, of course, sitting on his heels, and then he said, "Why, did he hate *any* work?" I really think that he does not, for he never wants to put it off, which I always do. When I go on the road he carries my bed and food. In the villages where we stay he sets up my cot and cooks my food, and he does not put on airs. Even on the road he giggles — which is almost incredible.

April 8.

There will be little time to write a letter because the mail will have gone before Mrs. Weber and I shall have returned from our trip to Nkôtôven. But I must tell you about the leopard. We hear of nothing else since Dr. Weber shot it. For several nights, since Sunday, per-

haps, the leopard had been taking sheep from Nkole Si, the village just outside our boundary and more than halfway down the hill. On Wednesday night Dr. Weber set a trap made of net, with a gun set to go off when a bent sapling was released, —I can't explain what I don't understand. He left some slack in the cord attached to the trigger, as it was bound to rain, and he went to bed in a hut beside the trap. It did rain terrifically, but the slack was overlong; the leopard came and went unharmed. Thursday night he set the trap again, and went to bed in the hut. Mrs. Weber and I were left at home, of course. At midnight the gun went off. We heard it and the long echo of it among the hills. Silence, and then other reports — the doctor's rifle and a native gun, and then the cries of the people in the town. I got up. Past our house, from his, patters Mr. Reis with his lantern. I wonder — he is so quick — is he in his pajamas. Past patters Hemmie with his lantern. Presently down the hill patters your child with a lantern, and is followed by half the population of Nkpwa, who have come up over the hill. Much gabble by the way, but no dawdling. We turn off into the town of Nkole Si. The leopard is in the palaver house, and there, too, are all the heroes; the palaver house

is packed with vociferous heroes. Even old Abota, too feeble to come to church, hangs to the skirt of this assemblage of heroes. Only a little boy out in the dark under the stars proclaims himself a coward. "If I had met the leopard on the path," pipes he, high and happy, "I would have feared." "Would you, indeed?" say I. "I would, indeed," says he, "little me!"

The leopard, poor beautiful creature, has nothing to say to his adversaries. He lies on the floor of the palaver house, and here is an end of all his "burning bright in the forests of the night." All the heroes maul him. They roll his fearful symmetry in the dust. From nose to tip of tail he measures eight feet. The doctor is in love with him; Mr. Reis is in love with him; the very little coward out in the dark is so in love with him that he shrills the beauty and the terror of him to the stars.

Because his whiskers are terribly potent, quite beyond your imagining, Mr. Reis is set to watch his whiskers most particularly, lest the heroes arm themselves with these and so be in a position to do away with their enemies. You were never yet struck by a leopard's whisker; besides, the white man is impervious to evil charms; so he mocks.

Presently the leopard is tied to a sapling and

we start up the hill by the light of lanterns and the Southern Cross and the Scorpion.

Such gabblings yesterday over the distribution of the meat. We know that a bit of the nose went to make hunting medicine, the which, if you pour it into the nostrils of your dog, does much sharpen his sense of smell. But the whiskers are intact. The meat of leopard, they tell us, is very tender, and sure to establish the courage of the eater — food, you see, for heroes — and too potent for women and children. Too potent, say we, for the white man, and that is lucky too.

Sunday, April 9.

My dears, on Friday and Saturday before Communion, I was let help with some of the new confessors. I never had a hand in this before, and it is a very exciting work. All those days were exciting. Seventeen hundred people were at the Communion service; and for days before, the Christians from a distance camped in the guest-house or visited in the towns. The church membership, culled out of the instructed and tried Christians, has come to be two hundred. The care of such a multitude is beyond our powers; the supernatural element in the enlightenment of this people is awfully percep-

tible. Certain incidents witness to God's dealing with his own in spite of us. Not having kept pace with the work, I feel strange in it, and timid.

April 17.

Back from a trip to Nôktôven — four days on the road, making about fifteen miles a day. A pleasant open path all the way and a very fair degree of comfort. Mrs. Weber went with me, so I had no chance to write you, my dears. She had the morning meetings and I the evening. At Nkôtôven they were disappointed that we did not stay longer. Zamô is the angel of Nkôtôven, the shepherdess of the poor silly sheep of that region, an old, wise shepherdess; none of your rococo ladies, but a shepherdess with a compelling crook. We were brought to her town by her importunate plea, and she was hoping that we would bark at her little flock, which at her instigation we did. "Aha!" nods old Zamô, sitting up in the village schoolhouse by Mrs. Weber, who is speaking — "Aha! Did n't I warn you of just this! And now it has come to pass. How you believe the voice of the white woman, silly sheep, — it is well that she speaks the words that old Zamô has not wearied of telling you! Listen to this, will you, and be sure that you will hear these same

arguments again! Old Zamô will be at you again when the white women are gone!"

She put us up in her own house, where the rain leaked down on our faces where we lay on our two cots under the same net. The first night we slept at Alum; second night, Nkôtô-ven; third night, Esen, and fourth night, Efulen. Obam, my boy, does very well on the road. What do you suppose we had for supper? White boiled rice and bread and butter! And a peanut porridge. And once some tinned grapes. I sure do know how to make myself comfortable on the road. A little teapot sings a little song of comfort on any old fire in any old palaver house; a rubber tub full of clean water makes all things new at the day's end. Only — how to carry bedding enough to keep me warm above and below on my cot, now that the rains are on.

If it is not necessary to put me into school work, I shall find any amount of town work to do. There is an element of depression in this work — an hour in every day when one wonders however one comes to be batting around in such desolate places, a kind of homesick misgiving, very real and hard to bear. This poison never works on the road, but in the hut where one is to sleep and eat. All the other hours of the day are happy hours.

April 21.

Day before yesterday morning we started out for Biba bi nyan. I think we told a thousand people where we were going, and a thousand people told us that the path was bad. This proves that you cannot fool all the people all the time. "Where are you going?" "To Biba bi nyan." "Eké! The bad path!" We were walking — Obam, my boy, and another lad carried our loads. We turned off the highway three miles from the hill, and walked perhaps five miles in a path part forest and part sunny clearing, settled with small villages. At noon we struck off into the deep forest. We climbed for four hours, most of the time a stiff grade. Crawling around in the forest like that, one has very dim ideas of topography, even of direction. Part of the time we could hear a stream, — often we saw it, — a perfect beauty, quick and clear over a rocky bottom. Sometimes we crossed it on logs and sometimes the boys carried us over. It came back and back to the path and the path went up and up among the mossy rocks under the deep green gloom. Lovely country, but hard work. Late in the afternoon we came out on a level, and a few settlements. And from her town Abote came out to meet us, laughing and fluttering her lifted hands, as the Bulu do to a

beloved guest. She is an old woman and good: a good old woman laughing with joy to see the white women in her little mountain town. We put up in her little hut — so tired I was that I kept stumbling over our boxes and our cots and the woman who was grinding peanuts for our supper. Mrs. Weber spoke that evening to the villagers in the old palaver house with the rain booming on the roof. By and by we found ourselves in bed. My old green cot is a friend. People laugh at it for a defect of its legs — but I don't laugh at it, I just go to bed on it. That is a great country for game — the monkeys play of an early morning in the street of the village. People came in to see us before we were awake; they soon settled that. I had the morning meeting. And by eight o'clock we were off into the forest. Oh, my dears, some light rain of golden day filtered down into the dusk of that green descent, and the birds sang for Siegfried. We were out on the evil path by noon, forest-weary and forest-wise, — wise with that wordless wisdom that comes from actual physical grapple with the earth, and that makes you feel, so long as you keep the touch of it, so much better than your mere floor-walker. We came out of the forest perfect snobs — of a fashion. So we walked and we walked and we

walked. By and by it rained — really, you know. We were in a stretch of forest, and then in a clearing. The rain came down the path in jumping torrents. Once the back of a snake showed itself in the river of the path and scared me. We kept on — there was nothing else to do. When we came out on the highway our thousand friends put their heads out of their huts to yell at us from under the streaming eaves, "It rains!" Quite so. "Where had we been?" "The bad path!" We slapped, slapped, slapped on and up the hill to the house, where we drank hot lemonade and were glad of home. Still, even before I changed my wet clothes, I was glad of having gone.

April 26.

Yesterday I was resting through the noon hour in a house in Asôk. I had spread my grass mat on a pole bed and was very comfortable and happy in the hot gloom of the little hut. A woman was pounding cassava paste in the wooden trough between her knees, her big pestle rising and falling like the dasher of a churn. Often she would stop to take breath. When all the cassava root was pounded to a smooth gray-white paste, she threw it out on a green mat of leaves. From this mass she took

the handful which she moulded in a leaf to a roll and tied ever so deftly and laid by to be cooked when all her paste should be moulded and wrapped and tied into exactly similar green batons of perhaps eighteen inches long and an inch and a half in diameter. Her slim hands with the long narrow nails were very pretty, very quick. Soon she would be stacking her twenty batons in her black iron kettle, where the water would be shallow, and this she would cover with layers of plantain leaves tucked in to hold the steam. A big lift, a sigh, and the kettle would be on the fire in an end of the hut.

I was watching all this steady deft business as I have done a thousand times, from the low bed of poles under the little loft at the other end of the hut. Nine little children, all absurdly of a size, all about five years old, were sitting on the floor in a row — a kind of little audience to the tableau of the white woman recumbent. A flicker of discreet murmur played along this line, and presently I began to take note of the sense of it. Said one, "I take the hat." Said another, "I take the shoes." "I take the dress." The book — the mat — the umbrella — even the poor thing's cherished hairs were all appropriated by these little brigands. I laughed, and

all the guilty nine quaked. In the afternoon I had a meeting.

May 6.

Binjim is the headman of the town at the foot of our hill, a mild-looking old man with deep eyes sunken in a withered face. He looks mild, but they say that he is subject to rages. When I pass his town I greet him; often we chat together. To-day as I pass he calls out, "Come in"; and I go in to where he lies in his palaver house looking down the street of his town — the street that is too sunny. "I suffer," says the old man on his bed of poles, his old face very mild above his neck-ruff of dog teeth; "I suffer in my feet. Is your father well?" "He is well," say I. "Is your mother well?" "She is well, great thanks!" "You must tell them," says old Binjim, looking at me very kindly, "that an old man as old as this" — and he touches his white hair — "has made friends with you, has made with you a binding of friendship like *this*," — and he hooks his two forefingers together. "I will tell them," say I; "they will rejoice. They see the path long between their town and this." "Surely," says old Binjim, looking at me always very kindly.

This morning we saw the comet, at half-past

four, in a clear sky. A great humming on the hill; everybody out. There will be more doing when it grows brighter.

May.

DEAR DR. HALSEY:—

I don't see how I can make you feel the thrilling quality of the work here. We of the Kamerun interior are in a kind of golden age, a blossoming season, the time of all others for spectacular effect and for exhibit. Particularly a prime time for exhibition because we are still formative. We may become, if we are adequately understood, a most glorious example of the fruits of missions. From the standpoint of a visitor this is the time for a visit, for we are still by way of being an adventure, still primitive, still romantic. And God is dealing with this forest people in a very moving and intimate way, which I take to be an initial way. Myself, I would suffer long journeys to witness such dealing. If only you could come again! We would take much better care of you this time than before, for conditions are changed for the better. And you would do for us again the incalculable service you did before, and we would progress, as we have progressed.

I am enjoying my work here immensely. For

the first time in Africa I am free of school work and to give my strength to work among women. I was thinking yesterday that I would write you about my adventures, the day's work, for I was all day on the path, and in and out of houses. Sick people I saw and dying, and little newborn babies as marvelous as ever, and widows going to new marriages, and a man beating his wife. It is a mistake to conclude, I suppose, that a man beating his wife is just doing so for love. He may have been provoked. However, my tribal instincts are too strong for me and I called time. The man looked at me with red in his eye and his heart shaking his big ribs. I babbled politely until I thought the woman, unless a fool, must have lit out into the bush back of her house, and until the man breathed easier and his pulse slowed up. He wanted to tell me the palaver, but I did n't want to hear it, for as likely as not the woman was in the wrong.

The drum calls the noon hour and I see that I will not be having time to detail all the excitements of my day. They were not all violent.

May 17.

To-day I was speaking to a woman who said: "Mrs. Johnston knew us all, but you are new

and to your eyes the people are yet as grass." Yet they are very patient and appreciative. They never question my effort to know them, and they are always saying, "You are friendly; you will end by knowing us all." Myself, I wonder.

To-day has been very warm for this season. Coming up the hill with me this evening was such a worried old man, fat and with bad feet. He had lost a girl who said she hated her husband and who had run away at dawn. "Maybe she is in your town?" pants he, and shins it up the hill. I don't know whether he found her or not. I hear that I have a drum name to-day; Ndonga says my name is to be, "In every rich town there is something precious." Very neat. Are you not worried about your precious thing that has somehow fallen out of the pocket of your town?

May 18.

This morning most of the parties to the palaver of which I was writing last night, came up on the hill, a characteristic company lacking only the husband. The girl, quite young but not an innocent-looking girl, with a new green leaf suspended from a green bead belt. Her two fathers, — don't ask me where she got them, — the old man with the bad feet, not really im-

proved by his adventures, and another father more crafty, also more dressy. The mother evidently on the girl's side. The brother, a big stutterer, leading a dog. Lots of palavers come up here to be cut, for we are the only white people in this region. A dog is dragged to almost every palaver by one of the company. The doctor stopped working to cut this one; it was simple. The girl was sold into marriage before she was grown and now wants to marry another man. In every such palaver the white man's government is with the girl; so the doctor reminded the two old men and the brother and the dog. The hitch is, a bigger dowry was given by this girl's husband than the modern usage calls for; the old men will be out of pocket when they have returned the present husband's goods and have received the goods of the new one. Dr. Weber reminds them that the girl, if she is forced back to the marriage she hates, will run away again; and the girl, from the shade of a tree that makes green lights on her slim brown body, looks at her two fathers with malice and cunning. They go away still gesturing in their agitated and beautiful fashion, the girl walking with a provoking grace, and the dog, who hung back on the way up, hanging back on the home run.

May 28.

Mrs. Lehman came over from Lolodorf, a week ago, and day before yesterday I started back with her to spend one night on the way. I don't know, my dears, why this trip amuses me so soon, — one must usually wait a year or so to be properly amused at one's adventures. Maybe Minteta forced the fruit of this particular journey. Obam was to carry my bed, Minteta to carry my water-bottle and lunch, my mat, too. He is a little boy with inordinately long teeth which are always smiling at one. He is a poor little boy at whom every one laughs; no one feels the romance of Minteta but himself. He carries on the business of living along such grandiose lines that he practices many ample parts. On this occasion he was my protector, though Mrs. Lehman called him my "shirt," because Dr. Weber had covered his poor little brown body with a white shirt. Here you have the kind of astigmatic appreciation with which Minteta's epic parts are met.

The day was very happy, a beautiful day, and neither of us was tired when we arrived, at something after three, in the little town of Nkole Miale, a village on the top of a great hill and quite in the forest. A village exceptional in its indifference to the things of God. I had

the evening meeting in the little palaver house after the great rain; beside our carriers there were three women and a man at the meeting, and a huddle of sweet little brown girls, little slim brown girls like little gazelles.

For supper Mrs. Lehman and I had yam soup. We went to bed, she on her bed of leaves and I on my green cot. Outside I could hear the monkeys in the plantains by the door.

Mrs. Lehman went on in the morning and I turned back into the long green descents up which we had come the day before. When we came to the great swamp Minteta went ahead of me, showing his great teeth before which the snakes fled — at least we found none, though we beat the swamp to make for ourselves a better way than the plain way by which Obam traveled with his load. We did not do badly. But we cannot think that you will ever know just how we did. Once out of the swamp we began to ask for carriers, and these the Lord provided; an old headman and his friend promised to carry me. Obam rigged a hammock of my steamer rug, the one Mrs. Foster gave me, and in the short sling of this your daughter is carried, her muddy white stockings crossed and her good, good feet that never wear out hanging out either side. Very fine. Sometimes

we stop and speak with the villagers — I will tell you presently what about. Sometimes we make a cup of tea. "Is the water truly boiling?" I ask Obam, and Minteta says, giving me all the reassurance of his teeth, "He would not deceive you!" Another time I duck into a woman's house, and my little "shirt" stops at the door to say, oratorically, "Women sit down in women's houses, but men go to the palaver houses, and I will wait for you in the palaver house." "Yes," say I, "and little boys that don't want to be laughed at must be humble." "A true word," sighs Minteta.

So we journey through a golden day, and no rain falls upon us, though it falls everywhere else.

June 15.

To-day, for all it rained, I had a good meeting at Mbedum. I have been telling the women about the different names of Christ, a matter which must puzzle them, I think, unless it is brought home to them in its parallel to our experience, for we all have more names than one, and there are meanings in our names as there are in his. To-day we were learning about the name that He loved to call Himself — the Son of Man. They liked it, poor souls, and were quite intelligent about it.

June 18.

I have been out all day among the Yemon clan and have had a good day. Corn was ripe in the gardens by the way and I roasted an ear in the embers to keep me merry. You know — or ought to — that a full ear of corn is best achieved by a well-fed lady — she must have well eaten before she goes out to plant. Quite a number of such comfortable people must have planted this year — there are full ears a-plenty.

The road to Yemon is pleasant, and there were butterflies in the way to hold up the slothful man. I went to see old Obela, a Christian ancient woman who has outlived her day and still waits her great adventure. I gave myself the excitement of giving her a cloth with which to cover her old brown body. She was less surprised than I was, for she could not guess that she was distinguished by my unique charity, the heroine of my unique debauch. Poor old soul, she will enjoy the Communion season better for her proper dress, her bit of bright cloth about her loins.

Obam whispers over his lesson by my lamp and the sound does not make for peace.

June 24.

The dry season is on, the sky is overcast, there is a deeper depth to the valleys, and the bloom upon the forest is like the bloom on a plum. Soon we shall be leaving for mission meeting; at least, I shall be leaving in the middle of July to help Mrs. Schwab get ready for the guests.

Lolodorf, August 12.

I write in mission meeting; it draws to a close. The Webers go home on furlough and I go back to Efulen, to be visited through the year by women from other stations. I mean to get Medola, a good and expensive cook, — five dollars a month, — but a trustworthy grown man; I will take younger boys as assistants. I will leave here as soon as Mrs. Schwab is free to go with me. Mr. Heminger and Mr. Reis and myself are the Efulen force this year. Mrs. Lehman and Mrs. Good will visit me.

August 23.

At least maybe it is the 23d. I have been busy and preoccupied and so I shall be till I leave on Thursday morning. Mrs. Schwab goes with me, poor dear, and is the first of those noble ladies who will leave their happy homes to make the Efulen women's work possible this year.

Efulen, August 28.

I laugh to think of this journey for reasons which may be apparent or may not. I will tell you about the journey before I forget it, but not before I settle. Last night I was much impressed by my estate as householder, for I went to bed in my own house for the first time in my life. And glad I was to go to bed, there or in a thicket or anywhere at all.

August 29.

I sit down at evening in my own half-cleaned house and I feel more than commonly contented, because I can say any sassy thing I please, just as the other real women do, and no one dare answer back. "Fine too much!" I like it so much that I can't get down to telling you about our extraordinary trip. It certainly was an extraordinary trip, and always I shall remember the kindness of Mr. Johnston all through the effort of it. Myself, I have never felt more befriended. Mrs. Schwab says he is always to be counted on for sure kindness.

August 31.

Masongô, a beach man educated at Benito, has made for me a translation of Mr. Ibia's "Benga Customs," and has a note concerning

a word of which he says, "This is a word applied to women and means 'staggered coxcomb.'" Very neat. One wonders how the title is earned and whether one has earned it. I should say there was quite a crowd of staggered coxcombs at the foot of Pikiliki hill when we foregathered after our various disasters.

On Thursday morning nine of us started from Lolodorf, and it was raining. Mr. and Mrs. Adams and Evelyn in the Lehmans' jinricksha, Mrs. Ford in my old wheel chair, Mr. Ford on his wheel, and the Hansens on wheels, — all these for the beach. Mr. Johnston on his wheel was to go halfway to the beach, visiting Christian communities. Mrs. Schwab, on a wheel, and I in the new one-wheel chair that a friend gave the Goods and that they have put at my service. We two were to turn off at Bipindi — about thirty miles down the highway — and make south through the bush to Efulen. I sat up in my new chair, so happy, my dears, in Dr. Lehman's rubber cape. Well, it rained. A one-wheel chair is not just simple, but I had two trained men. I was the first to leave Lolodorf. Presently Mrs. Schwab drifted past in the rain, mud to her shoulders. Six miles out I came on her sitting in the mud on a bank eating a sandwich. Mr. Johnston drifted up, mud to his

shoulders; together we looked at this pitiable object and she looked at us. I wanted to go back, but that would have been silly. We went on. The Hansens slipped by, mud to the shoulders; I have not seen them since. On Pikiliki the mud was bad and my men and I fell down, with the chair, but no harm was done except to our beauty. I cried out to the men in my own heathen tongue, "It is all right"; and they brooded over me in terror. At the foot of Pikiliki I found Mr. Johnston and Mrs. Schwab. We made coffee in a hut, and dried out. We were all but off when Mr. Adams came in on foot — the jinricksha had broken down in the mud. Poor Mrs. Adams is still weak from sorrow and illness. Presently in came Mrs. Ford on foot — my old chair had broken down — and Mr. Ford's wheel had broken. You see the staggered coxcombs all foregathering in the rain. Those of us who were fit left our vehicles to the unfit; we started out on foot and beat it. The afternoon was pleasant when it came. Mr. Johnston said that, since we were not to have the chair, he would see us through to Tyange (where our tent and beds and a hammock were waiting for us), and would spend the night there. Mrs. Schwab rode her wheel until perhaps four o'clock, where we turned off the

highway, and where we left the others who go to the beach. Jewel Schwab was very weary, poor girl. Mr. Johnston trundled her on his wheel in the narrow bush path, and carried us over streams and cheered Jewel with all sorts of fool talk. We walked perhaps an hour after deep dark — bad walking. When we came to little rifts in the forest there were familiar stars, I never was more glad of them. Ela came out from his town to meet us with a lantern, and so we came in at last very weary, and, for once in my life, footsore. A tent is certainly a blessing. We revived after we went to bed and sat up in our cots to eat cocoanut cookies and to look out at the camp-fire. You must always owe Mr. Johnston for his kindnesses. He left us in the morning and we came on from there with one hammock and four hammock-men, — we rode turn about. We put up on the top of the hill. The next day I made a hammock of my steamer rug, picked up two men, and came in finely.

The women here are so sweet about my coming back. We are to have a great time here next week when Mr. Johnston visits us for a few days, but just now I can't see beyond my scrubbings and hustlings. To write you this letter, my dears, with my own hand, I drank coffee after my supper.

Efulen, September 28.

I am coming to be a kind of doctor to the hearts of childless women, of whom there are pitifully many in this country, and to the hearts of those whose little ones have died — and there are many of these. I think that in the geography of African misery this region of maternal anguish is the most populous. For good reasons many women are barren and many lose child after child at birth. To the sorrow of their hearts are added the burdens of superstition and blame, heavier than you can imagine. A young woman who had lost three babies was hoping so much for a child, but it died at birth. The poor girl was so tormented by her husband and his family that she walked, on that same day, four miles to her mother's town. There I saw her the next day, lying on a pole bed by a fire, her arm across her face, shutting out the world that had so little to comfort her. It was in that girl's heart to think that she had been bewitched, as surely all her people do. She baked me a plantain among the embers by the bed, and presently talked to me a little out of her great bitterness. Every day, almost, I have such a talk with such a woman, and I am glad of the things I believe — for the sake of the women I am more glad than words can tell.

Just these days we are managing an adoption — a baby, whose mother has just died "of a witch," is to be given to a young woman whose four babies never lived long enough for her to hold them. All my conversation with this girl about the little strange baby, whom she has not yet seen, is rather curious. Mejô wants the baby badly, but after a sad and jealous fashion. Doubtless the little thin thing will make its own place in the mother's haunted heart.

I see that I am writing you all of one matter, but a matter that bulks so large here and everywhere.

October 6.

Nowadays I don't have a minute to call my own, and this without having any great burden of work. But I have visitors all the time and must be listening at all hours to the story of their lives. If I write at night I can't sleep, so how can I tell about the widow with whom I ran away? This appeared to be at the time quite an episode. I went about it rather nervously, as I suppose all beginners do. But it passed off very well, I thought. We had had word for some time that Minko Meballi's mother, whose husband died the other day, was being abused

in all sorts of dreadful ways past writing about. Mr. Heminger was too busy with his Communion crowd to leave the station, so I started off on Monday morning in my chair, with Ndongo Mvé and a man from Nkpwa'a. We picked up Minko as we passed her town, quite dressy with a sailor hat. She is a nice woman and strong, which was pleasant and a good thing, as she could carry me on her back over bad washouts, — because always at the beginning of a journey one thinks that this time at least we will keep dry. The road to Tyenge is a by-road. It rained all day. And all day we passed little companies of men going to Tyenge, very dressy, to talk our widow's palaver. Old Binjim was out in the rain, very slow and stiff. When I stopped to drink coffee out of a thermos bottle the palaver house was full of men going to Tyenge. You may believe that they were not pleased to see me headed that way, and everywhere I heard, "Ah, mamma, why are you going to Tyenge?" "I am on a visit of consolation," said I. We came to our destination about noon; we had picked up a brother of the widow on the way, not by my intention but by his. Now I had two men who were keen on the adventure — Ndongo and the brother. We went through the first village of Tyenge at a dog trot, and

passed the village where the men were assembling. They called to us but we did not answer; we made for a cluster of houses on the side, and I went into the house of mourning. "Where is Zua?" said I, pretty roughly, because I was nervous and because I knew how unlikely I was to get my woman. Mr. Heminger and Mr. Reis had said that I would never get her, but that I could get evidence. Myself, I thought I could not get evidence and so had better try for the woman. The people in the house — all women and one at least a devil — said that Zua was at the river. "Call her," said I, and sat down to shell Ngon seeds with some little girls by the door. Another of the widows, a young woman, very ruddy under her bloom of mourner's clay, fell to crying. I was thinking what I would do if Zua hung back, which she was quite likely to do. When I heard that she was coming, I went out and walked across a little field of young corn to where she was making her secret widow's way to her house — no widow may walk in the open. I could see her clay-covered body and the green widow's weeds flapping against her thighs. I caught her by her hand that was very cold, and was surprised to find her fairly young and very big — I suppose I thought I had come to protect a weakling. I fixed her

with my eye and my voice and she began to whimper. "You do as you are told and don't you dare disobey the white woman," say I, and I yank my poor widow into the path. It is a shame! Minko says that her mother, when she found her at the river, begged to be left to die. But that dream of luxury was shattered as you see, and I dragged her after me down the path to the palaver house, her hand very cold in mine. The men in the street and under the eaves of the houses stopped talking. It is not customary for a widow to walk abroad, and I would have avoided this breach of etiquette if I could have, but had to manage as quickly and as well as possible. "Where is Mebo?" I asked of a man who had stepped out from the crowd to wait for us in the middle of the path, leaning upon his spear. "I am he." "Mbolo, Mebo," said I. He is the chief in the town. "Ah, Mbolo," said he. "We of the hill," said I, "are weary of the evil news we hear of your town and of this woman. We do not hear yourself evil spoken of, but of your town we hear much evil news. And because we are weary of it I am going to take this woman away. Those who will talk her palaver must talk it on the hill."

With this he broke out, but I said: "I will not hear your voice or the voices of the men of

this town. I am a woman and I do not cut palavers. It is a small matter that you should come to the hill to talk your palaver, and you will do well to let us go in peace. I take leave of you." And I bullied my poor widow into the path ahead of me and called up my men, who had hung back I don't know where, and we were out of the town before they could get themselves together. So we made back through the rain with our prize, and I was much touched by the joy of those women who met us by the way and who embraced me and were glad, for all they knew that they would have to suffer many words and blows that night in behalf of the escaped widow. Don't you think it sweet of them to be so glad of what must mean persecution for themselves? You see there is here no government officer; we are the only restraining influence, and this was a case of extreme cruelty. We came back in the rain and the next day I was stiff. The widow I have not seen since; she is in her daughter's house.

October 23.

Last night I saw the Pleiades, to my great joy, drenched in their immemorial bright dew.

You see I had been drenched too, for I came home in a terrific rain, afraid of snakes as I

climbed the river of the path. Obam met me with a lantern — not from love, as Bitum would have done, but in the way of duty. He is an excellent workman, a great giggler, a fine white-toothed black boy. Ndongo is my steward — an anxious lad, with a frown of attention between his eyes, slow and clean. Madola, who is perhaps forty-five and a beach man, gives me his best. He was once steward on a steamer, and when he means to throw fragments away he says, in English, "It must go for slop-side deck." We have besides a hewer of wood and a drawer of water; and I have, for hanger-on, Minteta, my little honest prig. Or not honest, perhaps, but undoubtedly a prig.

Mrs. Schwab goes away next week, when I expect to sob. Mrs. Good makes us a visit, and so for the present I can keep things going here.

October 28.

I have taken Minteta on to be my very own. Don't know why, I am sure, except that he is the glibbest, most irresponsible poor little priggish liar that could be had for nothing. Day before yesterday marked the adoption and I spanked him for stealing potatoes and for lying. He took his spanking very well. We walked out in the afternoon, happy Minteta babbling

all the way. "Don't talk," says the brutal missionary; "I will like to hear your voice when I forget your badnesses." You need n't worry — he talked on. Father knows the type of Minteta and that there is nothing in it; but this father does not acknowledge, who has been and always will be an easy mark for those light arrows, plucked out of a goose's tail. Some one "tied" father and me to our amelioration of the condition of Minteta. We have none of the glamour that should cover such futile efforts. Minteta's lies form in my head before they flow out of his mouth. His favorite phrase is, "I could not deceive you"; and indeed he could not: not Minteta. He gambols, poor kid, before the little ark of his pleasures, so movingly, Michal would have to grin.

Mrs. Schwab is going after doing all the damage she could in the way of making me dependent upon her companionship.

Batanga, December 17.

Mr. Reis and I have been showing Mrs. Good the path to the beach. We got in yesterday, and this morning have the usual sense of having been beaten.

My dears, I am sad because Mr. Martin died. He died at home, in an attack of black

MADOLA, THE KIND COOK

water. I suppose that no one in that little Scotch village knew how to treat him, and the course of the disease is very rapid.

On the road we had such golden moonlight. The first night out I slept in a little house built for a black trader. His counter was the shutter of his window. We let this down, and all night I could see the little clearing bathed in the magic moonlight. There was no sleep that night, but a series of tragi-comic incidents, — punctuated by the exasperated appearances of Mr. Reis from the opening of the hut opposite ours. The most exciting event was the passing of a black soldier, who had come to arrest culprits who had not paid the yearly head tax of six marks, this being the ides of March for such. A clamor from a hut down the street announced him and presently he came into the range of my window — tall, draped in a cloth, his gun in hand, and followed by the depressed shapes of his captives, — I don't know how many melancholy figures, perhaps fifteen, — quite a patting of captive feet upon the highway. Out comes Mr. Reis into the moonlight and the soldier holds up his gang to shake hands. Our own company is placed by this conference among the redeemed, and off stalks the soldier, followed by the flitting brown shapes and the patting brown feet — a

kind of ironic parody of a hen with her brood, for the unhappy defiers of the law are scattered in the soldier's rear.

After this company chases an old woman, her back eloquent with the biggest and the most agitated grass bobtail I have ever seen. She waggled off, scolding in the most virile accents. She was to return scolding, and we were to lie most of the golden night listening to the most male tirade that ever woman achieved. Some one had stolen her peanut roast. Surely the magic of moonlight is potent that could transmute the events of this night into a kind of golden comic memory. Mr. Reis rushed out from time to time to expostulate, but he got so stung by that old viper that there was a little sound of giggling from the palaver house where our boys lay.

Mrs. Good's visit with us was so much a matter of excitement among the Bulu women, who came from far and near to see the widow of "Ngutu" — to look at her with curious eyes — yes, and with compassionate eyes — the eyes of "real women" who are not without a womanly appreciation of that long widowhood.

February 12, 1911.

I have n't taken a pen in hand for two weeks and feel less stale.

School has opened. I have twenty-two little girls; eleven live on the hill: cute little kiddies. And two kittens I have that rush at my feet when I rise in the morning, singing little hymns of praise to the feet of their beloved — very gratifying.

It is evening and there is a rose-colored moon. I have been to sup with my little girls; they invited me. They were sitting very brave in their clean house, the food on the table, when I arrived. I brought all the arts of a minister's daughter to save the day. We sat down together, thirteen of us. They pressed all the food upon me and would have been glad to have seen me eat it all, but they were comically greedy with each other.

What d' you suppose I had for supper? Greens cooked with ngon seed — very good; and ngon seed cooked with greens — very good; and mashed plantains and cassava cake and roast peanuts. Every one was very happy and beamed on your daughter. Presently up came the rosy moon and shone in upon the open kitchen where we ate, far away from my father's house.

March 1.

Your letter is a perfectly reasonable letter, and the women's questions are perfectly rea-

sonable, except when they ask if I am "making good." Even that question, addressed to the right quarter, would be perfectly reasonable. As for me, I am a perfectly good dead cat. I have even perfectly good excuses that would read well in a missionary biography. I spare them.

Efulen Station is the oldest Bulu station. It is now fifteen or sixteen years old. There are, as a result of the work, something over two hundred church members, and an immense parish, with adherents in innumerable villages. Two thousand people assemble of a Sunday. The work is exceedingly encouraging, the people exceedingly responsive. A minimum force for this station would be a minister and his wife, a doctor and his wife, a school-teacher, and a single woman. That is, three men and three women. This year we have had a minister, a teacher, and myself. We hardly touch the work. I have been at the head of the house, of the girls' school, and of the women's work. I run the house with a cook, a washboy, a steward, and a cook's mate. In the morning I oversee the girls' outdoor work and prepare sewing for the sewing classes, and hold meetings for the women for a few days before and after the first Sunday in the month, when they come in from outlying districts by the hundreds. In the afternoon I

oversee the girls' work in school; and on Wednesdays I have a meeting with the women who are leaders in their districts and who report to me conditions in the towns to which I cannot find time to go in these days, and they report meetings held. We pray together for individuals; I have a list of such. Sometimes at night I go down the hill to the towns with a lantern, to do some business that I could not find time to do in the day, and always I visit the little girls' dormitories in the evening. And once in a while I help the poor school-teacher struggle with a case of illness, for we have no doctor. It is horrible to see people die for lack of a doctor.

I must stop, and I have not given you the sense of a black face at every door, at every window, and the murmur of "Mamma! Mamma!" that beats upon one all day; and how sometimes we must say to the women who have come to speak of their souls' salvation, "Go away now, come to-morrow," — because our voice is worn out.

S.S. Alexander Woermann,
en route for Africa,
July 4, 1912.

I have been talking a good deal to a man called L., twenty-three years in Africa, a long time in the Congo, and latterly in Kamerun.

He was on the boundary commission and stopped at the old clearing when I was first out. I remember him bending over a map in the dining-room of the little old house. He was telling me what he has seen of sleeping sickness. He told me of the first case among white people, the first in his knowledge or the knowledge of Dr. Sims, — a missionary's wife, Mrs. White, — and of how they thought she had fever, and of how Dr. Sims said to him, "It looks like sleeping sickness." And he said, "Nonsense!" But it was sleeping sickness. He told me of a great smallpox epidemic in the grass country, and of how he made a mask for himself to protect his face from the infected grass by the path. He was not recounting horrors, though this sounds like it. I have just made a note of this among other things that he told me. He is the true type of old coaster, the best type, — pallid, rather well preserved, though I remember him to have been younger seven years ago.[1]

He knew a Pole many years ago, who was captain of a little steamer going up the Congo; the Pole's name was Conrad! "Yesterday I was twenty-nine years in Africa. How can a man spend twenty-nine years in Africa!" And when I asked him was he meaning that he

[1] Mr. L. has since died of sleeping sickness.

would not undertake another lifetime of the sort, he was quite indignant. He was just meaning how many dangers escaped, for he has been a man of adventure. He was telling me how he once nearly died, literally, of disgust because he had been eating monkey, — did not know it; his host had the bones and skin brought to the table after the meal. Mr. L. was taken violently ill. Since then he cannot like a man who eats monkey.

S.S. Alexander Woermann, July 14.

It is a sulky afternoon. Kamerun is hidden in the mist to the east, but we have the dim outline of Fernando Po to the starboard. Far mountains rising at sea; whoever looks at them unmoved, how strange he is!

We are reduced to Germans and missionaries. The Englishmen are all gone, most of them left at Secondi. There is a great langour about the ship. We arrive at Victoria after dark.

We are at Victoria. It is a heavy night. Fore and aft they have the hatches open and the sick air of the hold is about the ship. Under green lights that are like stage moonlight they are putting the cargo over the sides. The launches are fussing about with their load of silly barges. About the ladders there is the vexed agitation

of the white men's little boats, that clamor to which I never become hardened. There are perhaps ten men from offshore to spend the evening.

Good-night, my dears. We are so marked by light and noise in the great stillness of the dark that I think you must see us. Father knows so well where to look for us, so exactly very well.

Lolodorf, Sunday, July 28.

Lots of people glad to see me, and I am affirmed to be stout. It is evident that my mother fed me well. And has my sister borne a child, and is my father well? The husbands of Christian women who have been converted since I left came to present themselves, sure that I would be glad. There are a number of such men. It was good to look into so many friendly eyes. Ntet has lost a baby and her eyes fill when she sees me. Poor old Anjua is as disreputable as ever and Menge as fat. Little girls have grown up into what you might call damsels. Everybody is dressed and overdressed. The powerful Nkata is sad behind her tattoo because her girl has gone to the bad.

It is night; the woods are very noisy by the Hummels' house; a million insects are fiddling

on two strings. This afternoon I was in Esabange, where they say, as all this neighborhood does, that I am now a grown woman who came to them a child.

August 12, 1912.

My dears, I am assigned to MacLean Memorial Station, *alias* Lolodorf, *alias* Bibia. Miss Suderman is also assigned to this station, and the Hummels and the Emersons and the Pattersons and Dr. Lehman. Here is an end of a mission meeting which was very exacting to attention and judgment. We were forty people. Later three men — Lutz, Mertens, and Rode — from the German missions to the north came to visit us. Our German guests left this morning. Last night we were all ready for bed when a horse whinnied in Mr. Hummel's rose garden and immediately there was a clamor from the German's boys, in a tongue we don't know, — the horse was for Mr. Lutz, sent down from Idia. Great excitement in the night, outcries and the wandering of lanterns, Lohengrin on the porch, stout as usual, rejoicing over his swan.

August 15.

I have been given a free hand to be in the towns as much as I can, and the people are glad

to have me back. After five years, yesterday I was all day in the neighborhood of the old site, hunting old friends on the new highways, and finding a few towns still where they used to be, but half forgotten and overgrown. Old Benzork was sleeping in the house of his favorite wife. His town, that used to be a thoroughfare, is very quiet; the palaver house is fallen, and the grass grows in the street. They woke him to chat with me, and we spoke of the new evils and the ancient glory. Old Mam Ngon is very low; she was asleep in her little hut. I sat down by her head. She woke and called my name and began to sob. Vunga, wife of Benzuhli, who has lost four babies, has a fifth — a beauty.

I had my lunch under the roof of Bwajela's new house and then lay down on a carpenter's table under a little thatch. After a long day I came home in a chair. I had eaten out of many kettles by that time, my dears. It is sweet to come home at the end of day in a good chair by the dim highway. The ajap is bearing fruit now; there is a beauty on the highway, and the carriers sit down by the road to eat the fallen fruit.

I am so contented to be at work after the long delay.

Bibia, September 3.

Yesterday I went from house to house in this neighborhood, and there were women who remembered me, said they, when I was a little girl. At noon I spread my mat on the pole bed across from Meyée's bed where she lies in her little brown hut — some sort of nervous disorder — imagine it. We talked together through the noon hour; she was telling me that the people of the town were telling her husband, Woneli, that he must make magic for her or she will die. "Let her die first," says Woneli; "what is death to a Christian?" Meyée quite bursts with pride at Woneli's vicarious fortitude.

I said I wanted to go to Abwang, whose child had died; Abwang is a church member. A woman who sat by the door of the hut said she would show me the path; I thought this just a common courtesy; I did n't know that we were to chin our way up the banks of the Bekui and hang on to sapling trees for an hour each way. She certainly was good to me. Once she turned around to find me hung up; back she clambered, and she said, very sweetly I thought, "You are not alone in trouble."

Coming to the river bank we called, and a man came over for us in a canoe. One at a time we crossed, kneeling in the prow. Up the bank

again and through a little stretch of forest to a hamlet on the hillside, very quiet in the sunny afternoon. Abwang lay on her pole bed with her newest baby by her side; three children she has left. I found that we were six women in the hut, all Christians; I was much struck with such a gathering in that little brown shelter. I asked did Bekalli — the father of the child who died — did he make the usual accusations against the mother? And the women said, No, he just sat in his house and felt grief as they did. By and by I saw him in his palaver house, where he just sat and felt grief.

When I got back to Lemizhwon, old Anzia Mpila gave me three cassava cakes, a considerable present in these days of famine, and the women said, I —

September 6 or 7 or 8.

Too bad, I have forgotten what they said. But here is what I saw to-night. I am in Zenebot, halfway to Lam, staying with decent folk, Ze Mpioga — thick-headed but good. And this is what I saw: —

I went with my lantern into Ze's little hut; I sat down by the fire, and there was the family, too. Mendom was heating some water in a big black kettle. The youngest Mpioga, still with-

out teeth, was howling in the arms of little brother. Presently to the light of my lantern Mendom brings her three-year-old; she empties her hot water into a wooden bowl; with a sponge of crushed leaves she washes first one little foot and then the other. Kid howls. His feet are sore, poor little duffer, — he holds out his hand for his father to hold. Mother is relentless until both feet are soaked; then she opens a little leaf packet: there is salve made of the bark of the redwood tree; she adds a little palm oil to this, and very carefully she anoints the little feet. The sobs subside, and the child walks off on his heels. Now the mother pours more water into the bowl, takes the fretful baby out of the hands of little brother, stands the weeny thing in her belt of beads on the clay floor, and swabs her down with water. There is the familiar initial gasp. With her maternal hands she cleanses that little person all glittering with wet, and she says, looking at me and smiling, "God has sent me much trouble." And the father says, apropos of nothing, "All these have been baptized." I sit on my stool by the fire and feel steeped in the most human domesticity. Everywhere in the world at this hour little children are whimpering over their evening ablutions. It is a mistake to think that any child of a good

mother escapes. — So much for the illusions of little boys who would like to be heathen.

Efulen, December 16.

Here, my dears, is Efulen, but not just as I left it, for where we were three there are now seven missionaries — lots of nice young people. But here are the hills, in their most lovely moment of color; for it is the spring, and the rose and amber and pale green of the new leaf is everywhere under the morning haze. Lovely, lovely valleys; lovely, lovely mountains; like the mountains and the valleys in the backgrounds of primitive Italian pictures. So much beauty frees the spirit, and I would like to do nothing for quite a while but hang over the brink of the clearing.

I left Thursday morning, was on the road all day, turned off the highway at about four, and was in the Bulu town of Tyenge before dark. Had a little meeting and then to bed. Off after prayers at daylight for a long, long day in the forest and over the most incredible, heart-breaking, beautiful hills. Paths brown with leaves, promising always to do better and then rearing like a mean horse. It is not much of a path for a chair, and I walked ahead of little Bama and big Se Menge, who felt out-

raged, I should suppose, by the treacheries of nature. We made the town of Abiete, rebuilt since my day, by four o'clock. A big clean town. I asked for the headman; was told he was at the beach. Eké! I did not know then that he had gone to the beach a few days before tied up to a pole in a blanket and carried by soldiers. Dr. Weber investigated a case of torture in this town, and found that the headman had tied one of his women to a pole, had beaten her, and had burned her with a torch. The doctor sent pictures of this woman to the executive at the beach, and the headman was arrested. Said he would n't go, and so was carried. All this a day or two before my caravan put up for the night in the town of Abiete, where we were entertained with extreme and careful courtesy. Only this seemed to me queer — that no woman was allowed to see me alone, and when a group would come into my hut a man stood on guard. I knew there must be some palaver on; when I came here I found out just what.

I got in to Efulen the next day at three, a good journey, not a pain in my good little body nor a reproach for ill treatment. I must tell you — the day before I left for Efulen I attended an adjourned meeting of Presbytery, and heard six young fellows examined with a

view to coming under the care of Presbytery — young bucks that want to be ministers, my dears, and I knew them when they were in knickerbockers (note — figure of speech). Ze Tembe, a dashing, handsome young man, full of innocent swagger and a very real eloquence. He has been a Christian for perhaps five years, has never since his conversion had a serious palaver, wears his beautiful youth and his Christian successes with a kind of spirited and happy humility, is as definite as Peter in his expectation of an unblemished devotion to his Master. Next him, fumbling at his cap and answering in a low voice, my Bitum — no dimples. Yes, he once had a palaver; yes, he thinks in his heart that some may have been converted by his preaching, perhaps so, yes, perhaps so; and behind him sit his two brothers, who were, indeed, converted by his preaching — Melom, a strong evangelist and a man; and Etundé, as old, perhaps, as Bitum, but child-like; beloved by his elders; just in from service to the Yaunde tribes; making naïve gestures upon this solemn occasion, stretching his arms and sprawling as men do in the palaver houses, and without any sense of the direction of questions, so that if he were not handled by as wise a man as Mr. Dager, our Etundé would lose out.

A SCHOOL-TEACHER AND HIS WIFE

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Between these two brothers, Melande, whom you may remember, who has been for years a faithful and blameless evangelist; who — imagine it in this country — went virtuous to a marriage with a virtuous girl. There is no emotional quality in his response, but a very convincing and steadfast devotion. Then there are Bikwe and Nna, another brother of Bitum, and Mengun — these last are not present.

Lolodorf, January 6, 1913.

I left Efulen on Friday; we slept the first night at Nyabizimbi, as I had made up my mind to try a bush path to Lolodorf. The soldiers had been in Nyabizimbi all day; the husks of the corn they had eaten littered the deserted villages. They had been sent in on a punitive expedition, as the Nyabizimbi people were ordered out of their present neighborhood onto the road from Bipindi to Nkonemekok, and had not stirred themselves. They live along an old road that follows a river; the forest is full of beasties here; we saw the tracks of wild cows, and monkeys dropping in the most careless fashion through the open spaces between the great trees across the river. Nice walking in the golden afternoon. Very quiet in the villages, where the houses were all empty and all

open, like the houses in stricken towns everywhere and in any age. We came to one where an old man and an old woman sat under the eaves of a hut, too feeble to escape, in a panic at the sight of us, witless; and when we asked the name of the village the old man declared that he did not know. "I don't know, I am just an old man. I have lain on my bed ten dry seasons." "Ah, brother," says Se Menge in his lazy, laughing voice, "ten dry seasons you have lain on your bed in this village, and you do not yet know the name!"

We sat down for a few minutes in this company, out of humanity. At five o'clock we came into the last village of Nyabizimbi. There was a lame man and a woman sick of yaws. We said that we would sleep there. By sunset the lame man was beating the drum to call in the fugitives. They came slipping back from the forest, and by dark we had quite a meeting. Everybody very pious after the misfortunes of the day. They put me in a rather nice house; I noticed two holes, perhaps two inches across, in the clay of the floor, and was told that big spiders lived in those holes. My man filled them in and stamped on them. Much to my own surprise the thought of those spiders spoiled my peace.

More nice road in the morning until nine o'clock, when we turned off from Minken into the forest with an idea of coming out at Nkutu. As a matter of fact, we came out six hours east of there at five o'clock in the afternoon.

We had been warned by the people at Minken, where we had a meeting, that the path was bad, and it was bad. The chair-men will never forget the miseries of that day, carrying the length and the weight of the chair through the broken ways of the forest. I should have had a man with a cutlass to go before us. It was a hard day, and I was most grateful for my good feet. Mrs. Weber had given me a good lunch; there was fruit-cake intilt, and every now and again I sat down at the bottom of the forest to eat some bread and a bit of cheese and that fruit-cake — the best ever, I think. Late in the afternoon we came out by a river, the open sky the surprise it always is after a journey in the forest, and for more than an hour we walked through abandoned clearings. There is a peculiar beauty, noble and serene, about these abandoned clearings. The walls of the forest rise about the open grassy spaces that are like lakes, broken here and there by islands of palm trees or little ruined huts overgrown with vines. I have often felt the large peace of these empty

clearings and never more than on Saturday in the mild afternoon sinking to evening.

We thought, when we came at last upon a village, — we came in by the back yard, — that we were at Nkutu, but we were far from there. We had left our lantern in the forest; I did not try to find out who was to blame; we had shifted loads after a rest. Kungulu is two miles from Nko Ekuk, where we came out; Ze Zohnema is there as evangelist. We should have liked to go on to that town, but were too tired. I had my supper in bed; was about to eat it in the dark when Ze appeared with a lantern — so the Lord provided light. Sunday we went to church at Kungulu; had two meetings. Had a meeting at Nko Ekuk in the evening, sitting on a call drum; the lantern — the miraculous lantern provided by ravens — on the ground, and the miraculous stars as bright as miracles above. Many carriers at the meeting. Early in the morning — Eké! My dears, I woke, my watch said four — the best time to wake on the road. I got up and called the men; Bama came stumbling with sleep through the dim moonlight; I looked again at my watch — half-past twelve. Work it out for yourselves. All hands back to bed. We were off at nearly five. Found awfully friendly people at Melan. Here we turned

off for a few hours in the forest; not such bad going, and I had sense enough to keep away from my men and their struggles with the chair. Indeed, I was most happy from ten to three, walking in the gray and green of the forest, sometimes in little clear streams. Not bad walking at all. Several services of fruit-cake. Se Menge carried me on his shoulders when we came to mud. It rained, and silver struck the million leaves. At three we came out upon the highway; I did not guess it till I had passed the lemon grass that borders it, but there it ran, broad and clean, east and west. We were a tough-looking crowd. Slept at Mebande and were back here at noon.

January.

I am staying a few days in a village called Muga, by a river among the purple hills. Everywhere in the forest now the new leaves are burning bright, like our own forests in the autumn; under the haze of the dry season our violent spring lights a thousand torches. I am living rather grandly in the house of a man who is ambitious. There are three rooms in his house; the roof is high, ducks and chickens are underfoot, but I have the goats rather well in hand — "they very much fear the white woman." I

am the guest of the town. These people are old friends of mine; they are from Ipose; and I fare sumptuously every day out of their kettles. I am to have a fish for dinner, — a brown girl is busy on the floor of the hut with a big silver fish to be baked in green leaves. She laughs at my two little green peppers — two peppers are just nothing at all. I am to have, besides, a plantain baked in the ashes.

At sunup we go by little grassy paths to a village near by, where we have prayers. The Christians of this neighborhood and of every neighborhood have morning prayers before they go about their business. "At the time of the opening of doors" they straggle through the wet grass to some central village, hugging themselves against the morning chill. I begin my day with them. By seven the villages are deserted; the people are off in the gardens, or fishing, or felling trees in the new clearings, or hunting nuts in the forest. These mornings I have been writing, clearing off long-standing debts. At noon two Christian women will be here "to show me the path" among other villages. We shall visit in the brown huts where the big black kettles will be steaming over fires laid upon the floor. Most people are at leisure after three o'clock. At sunset we shall be

coming back to these uplands above the river; the white woman's portion will be brought her in a green leaf spread upon a wooden basin, and our day is done. It is rather forlorn in a native village between six and seven of an evening; at least, I always find it so; then I wish I were anywhere else. The smoke of the many fires wavers above the leaf thatch; women sit at leisure by the open doors; the evening comes down out of the sky above the clearing very firmly and very gently; no long twilights or other finicking nonsense; the stars keep their dates. Everything looks all right, but — I don't know — it is forlorn. Happily no one else suspects this; all the others think that they are at home.

Bibia, February 23.

Now I will be telling you how Miss Sudermann and I went to see the dwarfs on Washington's birthday, she very pretty and I "not so much like a white person," as a woman told me the other day. We got off no earlier than nine o'clock, which we regretted at the end of the day, for we did not get home until six. For three hours we walked west on the Yemvam path, — a good forest path, well settled. At noon we turned off toward the Malumba hills, through old gardens and up a steep ridge by a

little trail. We had our lunch on the way, because what is the use of going to see the dwarfs and doing vaudeville stunts like eating? I mean, we ate before we got to the town, because if we had eaten in that community we would have absorbed all the interest that we meant to arouse by the Word of God. I imagine we absorbed a lot of it, anyway.

On the top of our little ridge we came into a large air and a fine view of the precipitous Malumba hills. We were among them. Here was a little clearing — two shelters without a front wall, pole beds beside a fire smoking under the thatch. Some one who had been weaving a sling — one of those slings that women put about their foreheads and so carry their baskets — had thrown the work aside. The rough shells of ngalé nuts were on the ground. Nothing doing in that little clearing, nothing but sunlight and the thread of smoke from the embers. We went on a few hundred yards to a clearing — two bark houses and two shelters. In one of the houses, on a bed, a dwarf, who looked up and did not answer, and then did answer. A dwarf woman lay on a bed in a dark corner, ill with measles. A quarter of an hour farther on we came into the town of Mapvundi, whose son Mampuer we used to know in the old days.

This is a very orderly little town surrounded by a plantain garden. Dwarfs do not as a rule build towns or plant gardens, but here was the bark house of the superior tribes, thatched with leaves, and smaller than usual. There was in every house a hunting-net — one of those long, long nets, made of a hemp cord, with which the hunters fence in a section of the forest. In the palaver house, low, open on every side, a number of dwarfs sat, hairy-legged, with the face that is more like the gorilla's face than the faces of other men are. These were men, some of them with babies on their knees. Old Mapvundi, the headman, is not small. Few of these dwarfs were noticeably small or timid or dull. They were very friendly. Presently the women came in from the gardens, some of them very little persons. They came into the village single file, wagging their little bustles; dived into their huts and emerged in dresses. Yes, my dears, *dresses*. And cloths. The women have, so much less than the men, that curious look of melancholy that comes like a shadow over the shallow brightness of a dwarf's face. There were something like thirty in and out of the palaver house by the time we got down to business. Even the women understand Bulu, though their affiliations are all with the Ngumba. We

talked together for perhaps an hour. This settlement is within three hours of Muga, where we have a Christian community, and these dwarfs know the Muga people. I was telling them how a person of God says: "I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord." Just as a woman is glad when her husband says: "Let's go to see your father." And does she go with shame or with fear to her father's house? And what father, when he has sent for his girls, but looks for the last and the least one to come, before his heart sits down? And what girl is so heartless as to hate to rise and go to her father's house? So we talked long, and learned our verse with giggles and with sudden lapses into an aspect of profound and anxious melancholy. At the end of our time we were much approved. We went away into the forest with friends to show us the path, and when these fell away one by one the peace of the forest was all about us. In our deserted clearing we found a little dwarf woman putting her bit kettle on the fire, filled with plantains. She was eager with a smiling and nervous affability. Her husband was out hunting; to please me she told me that he was a person of God. I asked her if she knew who Jesus is, and she pointed with her finger to the sky,

looking at me with that sudden and haunting melancholy.

When we got down the hill into the Yemvam towns every one asked us, "Did you see them?" and laughed as real people always do when they speak of dwarfs. "And what did they give you?" Because no one goes to the dwarfs except to beg — for nuts or honey or a piece of meat. I heard a Yemvam woman ask my little Bulu boy, "And did Ngiamba really do no more than say, 'Go in peace'?" — Ngiamba being the wife of a dwarf — a person to be begged of — to be bullied, if necessary, into the making of those little presents which are the links between a dwarf and the august members of other tribes.

McLean Memorial Station, March 2.

To-day is the first Sunday of the month, and therefore collection Sunday. We had a congregation of something like nine hundred fairly orderly Ngumba and Bulu people, who achieved the feat of rising to sing a hymn and of reseating themselves when the hymn was sung, in quite a seemly fashion. We used, when we rose to sing, to stampede in a sort of stationary fashion; that is, we did not desert, but we exercised within limits — great yawnings and stretchings and scufflings of feet. So for a long

time we were suppressed; we sat through our hymns. Of late we rise from time to time, and with growing distinction. To-day over sixty men confessors presented themselves to Mr. Emerson, or were presented by the Christians of their neighborhoods. These are the fruits of the last month in this neighborhood, for the station church takes care of about a third of our parish. Mr. Emerson has a native church thirty miles from here to the east, and another nearly as far to the west. And there are leaders at intervals of from three to five miles all along this great highway. Mr. Emerson is a very efficient organizer, with a great knack for developing native talent. You will realize that we need just this gift in a work that has grown beyond the ability of the white man.

Benito, Spanish Guinea, March 18.

I came here to be a month with Mrs. Wright, and to-night I sleep in a plank house, who am a person of the bush, bred up between four walls of bark.

This clearing is by the sea, or by the Benito River, or by the confluence of these. To-night, when I look out in the moonlight, I look southwest on gray water; to the left the Benito River comes in; to the right the beach runs a little

NGUMBA WOMEN CARRYING FIREWOOD

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way west and then north; our little settlement faces the Equator — a hundred miles away.

I left Batanga last Monday morning, and made the one hundred and seven miles in six days. The path runs south all the way by the beach. The tides are tremendous in these ides of March. I would have walked at night, but I could not reconcile the moon and the tides, so we walked under the sun, that old enemy. Three men of my little caravan of four were from the forest; they were filled with wonder and a kind of impatience at the punctual habit of the sea. The fourth man was a Benok of the beach tribe; he carried my pantry and was our guide. He was too proud to speak our forest tongue. How was he — a Benok of the beach — to know the silly Bulu speech of the forest people? Only when the white woman spoke were the ears of our guide unstopped. My Bulu, you would have said, was of a peculiar virtue. A Bulu boy carried my cot and tin box. My own two carriers I had on my chair — Bama in the shafts to the rear, Se Menge in the shafts forward. The one wheel of the chair made a clean mark on the sand when I jogged along at ease beside a low tide, but, oh, my dears, how it ploughed a weary way through the hearts of Bama and Se Menge when the sand was heavy

or the tide high! There was then no question of my riding; I walked.

Bama cooked my meals, as he always does. There is no kinder person to me than little Bama — he serves me with an infinite patience on our wanderings, with a patience that waxes toward evening and is at the full when we settle for the night by our roadside fire. This gift of waxing patience is no commonplace; most of us wane in virtue with the day, and are on pretty sharp edge before we come to roost. Many times I have blessed Mr. E., who gave me little wizened Bama from his own caravan over a year ago.

Last night with my supper of fried banana and boiled rice he gave me a little harangue — that I must bear up — that there was "iron in food" — that our journey was near the dawn. All maternal concern he was then, and I was coming up out of the maudlin depths of fatigue to the sound of that kind urgence. To-night I wear fine linen, sleep under a zinc roof, and have a goat chop for supper. I shan't be thinking of Bama until I go on the road again. These sudden changes in fortune — how they divorce friends!

I write to you in pencil, my dears, because it is easy, and I must do the easy thing or nothing

at all. And I would rather do that last, anyway. We are all tired. Yesterday, on the last lap of my journey, I was wishing I were one of the old canoes under the eaves of the houses. When a canoe gets old here, they cut away the ends and turn it upside down under the eaves. There it is for a seat; it never journeys forth any more. All these little cabins by the sea have such a bench under the thatch outside the door. And all these little villages are full of the emblems of the sea, and the wind from the sea, and the talk of the sea. It is extraordinary to what an extent the sea dominates its margins. At all of my little meetings I have heard the Lord's Prayer in Benga, the people chanting in concert the most beautiful spoken word I have ever heard, and the sighing swell and ebb of it is like a voice of the sea, the voice of many waters, unified in a strain of passionate melancholy. I have never heard any spoken word so compounded of the elements and the emotions. But I have seen so much new beauty in this last week and in such a perceptive fashion as fatigue produces — I mean so objectively perceptive — that I feel very wise; you know that wisdom that answers from the deeps to the face of new beauty and then is submerged again like perceptions in a dream. From Batanga to the

Campo River the coast is of extraordinary beauty. Here the cliffs to the east shut out the morning, and to the west the thin veil of the forest is pierced and slit and torn by the bright pallor of the sea. I always imagined that the forest by the coast was fairly inhabited and so, used and stale. But there are empty miles between the villages where the virgin forest comes darkly down to the white foam of the sea. The little path runs between these in and out of the gloom, over the rocks and out upon the sands. Very few people travel north and south on this coast, so one is alone for hours.

In the afternoon there is another beauty, for then the forest is full of sifted light. There is then no mystery, but a kind of ordered magnificence, an illusion of avenues and terraces and deliberate surf. Everything waits for something understood and adequate.

Only, my dears, in the middle of the day, when the tide is high and the path is in the sand, you know just where you are and you wish you were a crab to dodge sideways into a hole, down and out of the furies of the light. Se Menge was detailed, because of his huge size, to carry me over the rivers, but failed ignominiously in the character of St. Christopher. His quakings before a tide-swollen river were

pitiful. He crossed the Itondi before I got there. I don't know how he had the nerve, but from the other side he watched me, his cloth kilted up about his thighs, until a man from a village came over for me and took me on his back. My men go back in the morning. They are in a panic, poor souls, for they can't think how they are to make their crossings without me to worry the people into getting them over in canoes. I shall tell you all about my trip, but this note goes back with them and should catch the German steamer from Kribi in Kamerun.

March 20.

I was telling you about my trip down the coast to Spanish Guinea. We left Batanga on Monday and slept at Lolabe, in a sordid little village where there is a man who claims to be a Christian, and who is, says Mr. Cunningham, in his most rolling Scotch accent, "double-faced." In the bamboo hut of the "double-faced" Mukoko I went to bed. A palaver raged outside until I lit my lantern, opened the door, and asked for peace. It was a starry night; the accuser and accused were afoot and gesticulating; but the audience had spread grass mats upon the ground and were lying at ease. In

such comfort the palaver might have continued endlessly. At the word of the white woman that impassioned shrill oratory ceased, brown bodies rose up from the ground, stretched themselves, brown mats were gathered up, little brown groups wandered off to disappear under the dark eaves of the houses, and then the warm night in the clearing pulsed with the stir of the sea — good time to drop asleep on a green canvas cot in the rat-infested hut of the "double-faced" Mukoko.

We were walking all the next day. At high tide we ploughed through the dry sand, at low tide we pattered along the hard beach finely. The sun was low when we came to a river crossing, where I was carried by one Mayo through the warm turbulence of the tide. On the back of this new friend, with my shoes hanging round his neck by their lacings, and the water about my arm-pits, I thought I saw the sea tumble downhill upon us. That was the effect of the tide coming over the sandbar into the backwater. Our dumb Benok guide was on the off side, — meaning, I think, to recover his white woman if she washed away, — and suddenly voluble in a language which I understood.

That night I slept in a charming bamboo house, clean and gray with the soft color of old

bamboo. Iyanga was my host, a kind and dignified person who understood Bulu. Other Christian people there were, too, who understood Bulu, so that we were able by lantern light in the sandy street of that little hamlet to "speak three words of the Word of God." We crossed the river the next day at noon. Here the Campo is the boundary between German Kamerun and Spanish Guinea, but a few days' journey up the river, it used, before the French Concession of 1912, to be the boundary between the German colony and the French Congo. Ntyorera, a Gaboon man, is in charge of John Holt's trading-post here; he is young, heavy-featured, laconic. I used to know his mother when I lived in the French Congo, and he was very kind to me in the proud Mpongwe fashion. The Mpongwe is the recognized aristocrat of our beach tribes. They are great givers of gifts — *noblesse oblige.* And Ntyorera gave my poor forest bumpkins gifts of rice and fish "on top"; he gave me a tin of black bread, — that would be good for me, he said, — and other tins he would have given me, but I called a halt, having accepted enough to appease Mpongwe pride. His wife, a pretty Gabonnaise, put me down at their table to a service as clean and formal as a white man could have man-

aged "in these days, in these streets"; a fried mullet and a boiled plantain I had there, and they were good. We crossed the Campo in Ntyorera's canoe. There is a very noble forest about the mouth of the Campo. It is true that I myself am a person of a noble forest, but here is the double magic of forest and sea. So that we bush people "very much wonder and admire." Directly south of the river a few miles there is a fine cliff jutting out into the sea. We slid past this between waves — to the silly horror of my men. We made poor time that day, — no more than twelve miles, I should think, — and were all day doing it at that; slept the night in a forlorn little hamlet called "London." Hé! The little hamlet of London — all dark under the moon — its little huddle of bamboo huts under its little huddle of cocoanut palms all brown by the white foam of the sea! Mamenji gave me his poor hut, and because I knew that there are people of the tribe of God in that town I called them together. I could not speak their dialect, nor they the Bulu, but they could look at their white woman, and I could give them that pleasure.

In London there is an old Christian with quite the grand manner and a great white beard, a distinction in this country, where most men

shave. To see this old perfectionist give up his seat to Se Menge and to see my mighty lummox accept this sacrifice in his brute fashion was to see a little comedy in sentiment — the man of sentiment meets the natural man.

Thursday at one we came to Evune, where Mbule Ngubi is the minister. My dears, you must read your Theocritus if you are to have any sense of that village by the sea, sunk in the shade of cocoa trees, the little bamboo houses filled with the wind and the murmur of the sea; nets drying in the sun or hanging furled under the eaves, canoes drawn up under the cocoanut palms that crowd about the path from the beach to the settlement. When I came out of the glare of the open into the dusk of the cocoa trees, grand young men shook me by the hand. I don't know who they were — the gilded youth of Evune.

Mbule Ngubi has what we call a "deck house," a house on posts with a plank floor. He is a tall man, perhaps fifty, with more of a grand manner and a beautiful simplicity. He put me into a clean room flooded with light and wind. Himself, he spread the bamboo slats of the bed with clean sheets. Water was brought me. I bathed and lay with my helmet over my eyes in that little chamber by the sea — and

gave thanks. We had our supper together. "My sister in the Lord is here," says Mbule Ngubi, "and shall I not kill a chicken?" We had a chicken and mashed plantain, with a sauce of palm oil. Here we had an evening service in that bamboo house which the people of Evune built for their Lord; quite a beautiful little chapel. So much order, so much kindness, so many bright stars above the little village and the wide sea! We were off before dawn. Ngubi ferried us over the two waterways with daylight, and at last when Se Menge got into a very small canoe with my diabolical wheel chair, that great hulk (Se Menge) so undisciplined, overturned the canoe and threw Mbule Ngubi, in his best black trousers, into the sea. You begin to perceive the part poor Se Menge plays in our adventures. At ten we come to another waterway, and at noon to the crossing of the Etonde River. We waited on a barren beach for a canoe to ferry us across. Then passed a thousand years of sunlight. I built a little shelter of my rubber sheet. My men shouted continually in the sun-struck stillness, but the little settlement on the other shore slept beneath its palms. At last, in the eternity we had accepted, a man was resurrected; we watched him dawdle about the launching of his canoe and paddle

across to our rescue. His townspeople, he told us, were busy burying their headman. I rested an hour in that village, where the people did not mourn their dead until I left. I don't know why. Perhaps the dead man had been bewitched, and there would be no use settling to the business of that sort of investigation while the white woman, whose heart is the heart of a white woman, sat in the guest-house. I saw his widows sitting in the ashes — naked and daubed with clay. From their chalked faces their glancing eyes looked out bright and very dark. I knew they were safe so long as I should sit down in their town, but I could not stay for that, poor souls; and perhaps they were safe, anyway. When our caravan was well out of the village, the concerted wail of the mourners rose from the many little roofs.

Hé! The long, long day! At four we stopped at the little village of Bomuda. I asked leave to change my dress in a black trader's house. They are very kind to me here; they spread a white cloth on a box and set me a little meal. Makemani, an old Christian, puts on his best and comes to look at me with wise and gentle eyes. At five we pass the beach of Bata; an Englishman changes some money for me at John Holt's trading-post; he looks as groomed

and shaven as if he were alive. It is in the trading-posts of Bata that Rockendembi, the old Fang chief, is so much feared. He comes down from the interior (of Spanish Guinea, you understand) gun in hand. With his following of young Fang bucks he invades the stores. Then is bargain day in Bata. We of the Kamerun do not know what to make of such fashions; our chiefs are unarmed, and better-mannered. But we shudder deliciously when we tread the scene of such adventures. Bata, with its little cluster of European houses about its little bay, is asleep in the late sunlight. It is so dead in Bata that myself, a person of the bush, I should be wishing every day that Rockendembi with his vivid clan would come to Bata. I should be wishing every day, if I lived here, for the sight of those ivory bracelets and those brass spear-heads, for the loud laughter and the arrogance of that forest company, for the smell of wood fires that hang about a caravan like Rockendembi's.

At six we come to a big Kombe settlement on the Ekuku River. Here Ipuwa's boy meets me and takes us by a long, long way through meadows to a street that runs down to the river. Here is Mbela Etian's house, a rambling "deck house." Mbela Etian is the son of Etian,

the minister, and is clerk in the house of an English trading firm here. Etian is dead, and his son is a man of this world, but he likes to remember that his father was a minister. Mbela put me in a huge room. I can't tell you how good this room looked to me. There was water in great jugs; there was a bed — big past reason — spread with clean linen. When I lay on my bed it felt so good that I wished myself bigger so that I could sprawl over more of it; I enjoyed a deeper sense of luxury in that room, open to the kind night and the Ekuku River, than I have ever done. I could hardly sleep for wonder at so much comfort; and my men slept that night for the first time "since they were born" in a "deck house." Pillows were offered them and I heard the sensation produced by these. I knew that they would be covered with red and white calico — a red design of a sort dear to the beach tribes — applied to a white surface.

All these days we had been carrying a clock. Certainly the wisdom of a clock is a thing to admire; you cannot deceive a clock. The dark of night cannot deceive a clock; it is or it is not morning. Like the voice of the Guinea fowl that speaks in the dark before the dawn, breaking slumber at the moment ordained from "the birth of men," the clock puts a little knife into

the traveler's dream. Before the stars were dim the clock had us out of our haven, and who knew when, if ever, we were to sleep in a "deck house" again. Mbela himself took us across the river. I waited for my men and my loads on the south beach while the dawn came. We made good time that day until eleven — a fine run on a level beach. And then the tire of my chair went flat. Se Menge had broken my pump two days before, and I walked seven of our last ten miles when Mr. Wright met us.

That day I saw stockaded villages, a thing that has passed in the Kamerun. One village with a double stockade I saw. This coast is lined with new settlements of forest tribes — very timid, very degraded — who have just emerged from forest life to beach life. Before every village of a beach tribe the canoes lie under the shade of a group of cocoanut palms — a blue shade on a white sand. Here the beach men sit and gossip. But these other aliens, so much of the forest, so strange to the sea, take their anxious ease behind stockades.

The clock, my dears, speaks its inexorable word. It is still with me. Bama and Se Menge sleep in the quarters, obviously people of another tribe than my father's tribe. The moonlight sleeps in the long plumes of the bamboo

about the Benito house spring. The white tide draws in to its gray sleep before my door, and the Southern Cross, in a sky washed by the moonlight of lesser stars, leans to its setting and sleep. It would be well that white people sleep; only fishermen and runaway lovers — yes, and the spirits — are abroad at this turn of the night.

March 31.

Good news! The lovely Mrs. Wright has a lovely little daughter.

Batanga, Kamerun, May 3.

We — myself and Mr. Cunningham, who has been visiting the people of God in Gaboon, arrived from Benito in the middle of last night. We came up in the Robina, a thirty-foot boat that carries a mainsail and a jib. There is a deck of adjustable planks over the stern and an awning above this, but the awning must come down with the change of wind. Mattresses are laid out on the platform and the passengers laid out on the mattresses. So sweet, my dears, to lie with the gunwale on a level with you and with your nose all but cutting the water when you hang over.

We had four of a crew and four black passengers mixed up with the rigging and our boxes.

There was a great laughing and the characteristic bubbling of Benga talk — the crew are Benga men because this tribe are expert seamen. If you could only see our captain, Iveki, son of the great Ibia, born when I was, but, oh, my dears, of such a different kind of poetry. He is quite the perfection of his type, — a type that you will never see, — and that is a pity. I hunt the word that will present him to you. His beauty is all slim and eager in action, and in repose is fairly massive. He sits idly, his hands at ease, but his action is immediate and exact. He smiles for secret reasons suddenly and slyly, and again he smiles suddenly and frankly. His teeth are amazing, so perfect and small. His chin is slight above his strong neck; his nostrils are delicate; he has the beard of adolescence and eyes of a woman. Sex plays with him a double game, and I have seen other Africans who show the same expenditure of charm — a feminine grace all velvet over the rock of heathen man.

The wind served us ill; we had long hours of rolling calm and of the most outrageous sunlight. One day we rowed for hours close in, to the sound of a tremendous surf. We were trying to land, and at last we came to the sacred rock of which it is not well to speak the name, and to

which tobacco is offered and rum is poured into the sea for libation. We were too poor to perform these rites or too impious. Back of this rock is a little place of calm, a haven. We went ashore here and made a real meal in a town near by.

The nights were broken and memorable. We slept, lying on our mattresses, and the gray water slipped by. There were clouds and stars in the sky and to the east the dark line of shore. We heard the surf all night. When the sheet struck the water there was a line of phosphorescent fire and new constellations whenever the men bailed the boat. One night it stormed, and I lay under the boom and the reefed sail as deliciously snug as the unfledged. There is no comfort, think I, all cozy in my shelter, like the comfort of vagabonds! and I sleep again, to find the wind fallen, the sky washed and tumultuous with stars, and old Masongo trampling on his passengers and busy with the sail. So we slept and woke and slept again; when the shadow of the sail was plain on the water, that was morning; then the gray of the world paled, and the stars in the sky and the little fitful stars by the boat-side died.

We were three days coming up, and I had got

quite out of the way of expecting to get anywhere when I woke to find Mr. C. sitting up beside me in the stern of the boat shouting out to "mind the rocks!" "You'll be on the rocks!" shouts Jimmie. It is customary to shout when you make a landing, and I always quake because I forget that it is customary. Lights were on the water's edge. As a matter of fact, we made a good landing, riding in on the curling of surf to the light of the lanterns ashore. The black boys rush out to meet us, get a rope from the bow, and hold her steady by this. I sit on the gunwale with my legs over the side waiting to be picked off. In my eyes the lanterns and the incessant white surf are a dazzle. Presently along comes Masongo, tall and lean and kind. He presses through the surf. His head is about on a level with my knees. When we next ease down a bit I let myself go into his arms and am carried ashore and go to bed. Old Masongo — how kind to me he was! Mr. C. teased the men about "calling up the wind," and they laughed. But once, when Mr. C. and I were asleep, I saw Masongo looking for the land breeze and calling softly the old incantation "braka epupu, viaka"! And of course the wind rose.

Hé! my dears, how far you live from these adventures.

Batanga, Sunday, May 4.

I have received father's letter with his judgment as to my next winter. I am turning things over in my mind. The idea of leave of absence does not appeal to me, as I don't see the logic of it. If I am — well, I don't see when I am likely to return, if I am needed at home; and if I am not needed at home, I would stay on here.

To-night, my dears, at sunset, Kamerun Mountain and Fernando Po rise out of the sea as blue as plums and as clear as Fujiyama in a print.

Lolodorf, May 31.

I sent off my cable yesterday, and am perfectly satisfied that I have done the right thing. You need not worry about my being contented at home.

I am very much comforted by the attitude of the older missionaries. They think that my place is at home if I think so. And you must say very simply to every one, that I have come, since the changes of the last four years, to feel that my place is at home. If you just say those words, neither more nor less, you will speak my truth, and you will find how receptive of a natural truth people in general are. I have no question in my own mind that I am on the right

track, and I have no question of my happiness at home.

I mean to take an inland journey during the dry season — nothing extreme at all, as I have not the strength to undertake an extended one. But a pleasant journey. I shall sail for home in the middle of October.

June 6.

Yesterday some Ngoé women, who are much more naïve than the Ngumba, came to the house of Ze to dress, four or five of them just in from the garden, their bright cloths in their hands. "Where is your mirror?" they ask Ze. "My mirror? Where is everything I own? My girl Ntolo has taken it to school, with my handkerchief and my piece of soap." But she produces a mirror, and there follows one of the most feminine performances you ever saw. There are as many ways of binding your head with a handkerchief as there are hats in a shop. In their bits of loin-cloths the women bound their bandanas, holding the little mirror between their knees as they stood. Such prinking, such laughing! Eyinga, the middle-aged — lovesick to the point of death for Se Menge, but since recovered — was found to be adjusting the third handkerchief over other two. "Eyinga,

you will kill yourself!" says Menge. But they all took a hand in the arrangement of this, a woolen one with fringe. It is fine to have a fringe of fringe! This done, it seemed that all was lost — her head was too big for the neck of her dress. "It must be undone," says Eyinga desperately; and they all laugh. "The perspiration runs down you like a river," they tell her. And I say, "She must be got into that dress somehow, and at once." She stands, smothered, her arms raised while they tug at her dress. She emerges, red woolen fringe and anxious face. Her coquetry is of a very serious type.

Our meeting, after so much vain flourish, was a good meeting, because the women behaved with such dignity, in such a womanly fashion. The home where we met was crowded, and now one and now another of the Ngoé women stood to speak, dark against the brazen light of the door, taller herself than its opening, smitten with gold under her chin and along the contour of her cheek, from the sun on the street.

June 9.

I like the house I am resting in so much: clean, doors to the ground, five good Bulu beds, a good floor. Azimbo is cooking me yams with olon, the bark of a tree that tastes like garlic; she

leans from her hips to grind the bark. She has washed me an enameled plate and an iron fork; she puts a little box before me. My food is set before me covered with a bit of green plantain leaf. The forest looks in at both doors, for this is the Medon road. There is an excess of hospitality in this house; am here an hour and have seen Azimbo feed five guests.

Ze Vupvuma, one of my chair-men, says, "Don't anger me. My angers when I am angered are terrible!" Needless to say, he is *not* talking to me, but to Se Menge. Ze says, "Am I your wife that you scorn me so?" He is a queer duck.

Well, my dears, we have come on two miles and are going to have a meeting under the roof of a native carpenter. Perhaps twenty of us and a dog, one of my own tribe, but too long an alien, — the dog, I mean.

Ko, another of my chair-men, is a man of many mothers. This is his first appearance since he served a term in prison for some devilment; and he is joyfully hailed in many hamlets. This morning he left me on top of the path to put his head in at a door, where the women greeted him: "A Ko," they said, "how we wept when you were in prison. What will you be paying us for those tears?"

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Mr. Hummel and Miss Sudermann have been ill; Mr. Hummel very ill for a few days. He is a much broken man; not more by this illness than by the long strain. Miss Sudermann has run a low fever for three weeks; was ill in bed for a week, but is now up and around; she still has a temperature of a hundred or so every night.

June 24.

I am on my way to Olama where there is a ferry across the Nlong River. We came through a beautiful range this morning. The dry season is on, and well into the day the carded mists hang over the forest. On the road, where the women sit beside the food they offer for sale, there are little smoky fires to drive off the gnats; these little fires in the gray morning smell of autumn at home.

Olama himself is a Christian, and that is hard for him to be in his town, where so many travelers pass — black and white. The Pattersons are there — have been for nearly a year; and that has been a big help to Olama.

Se Menge, my big chair-man, is so amusing and so is little Bama. Yesterday we walked and walked — no food to be had. Of every woman who sat beside her covered kettle we wished to

buy, but the food was bad or the price was bad, and my men could not be suited. Toward afternoon Se Menge said to me: "Ah, my friend, it is by the fruits of the spirit that we walk to-day, by them alone — love, joy, peace, long-suffering, particularly long-suffering!" This was meant for a joke, and not for a pious remark.

Elat, July 8.

My dears, it is raining, dry season notwithstanding. I am rooming with Miss Eick and we are packing for our trip. We are going as far south as the government post of Ambam and a good deal east of that.

I did, indeed, see an Elat Communion service — a most exciting adventure. I saw two hundred and forty-six Christians admitted to the church; a congregation of five thousand I saw; and lots of little babies baptized, looking at Mr. Dager solemnly.

Mba Esone came in from Bibia to-day; he tells me that my father and mother have sent me a present — he saw a great box in my room. Eké! What pleasure! And soon I shall be seeing my dear father and mother, but Mba Esone does not know that; none of the black people know.

I feel quite homesick to-night, my dears, with

the rain on the roof, a strange roof and a strange bed and all strangers everywhere. This feeling is because I am all day with black people whom I do not know; I always feel lonely when I am not busy with my own work.

Mejun, July 17.

I am about seventy miles southeast of Elat, in a forlorn little village of the Yemvae tribe. I got in this afternoon after a run through the forest from Ekwen. I left Miss Eick at the crossroads; we shall meet again at the crossing of the Nlobo River.

The women here are rather sweet. They have pretty manners with terribly coarse intervals. Their little dress, of an apron of green leaves and a belt of green and white beads, is very pretty. Most of these people have never seen a white woman, and to-night they see one at ease in their own village and eating a forbidden meat — a meat that is taboo for women — because to-day on the path four of our carriers came upon a leopard harrying a gazelle. They chased the leopard and caught the gazelle, so we have fresh meat for supper.

Miss Eick is having a good time, I think. The people are devoted to her; the path she is going is an Elat path; many Christians are in

the towns, simple folk who love her. These new people have something to give the black people which we older missionaries have lost — a kind of personal response to their wonder and a pleasure in their wonder that is worn away in time.

The women laugh at us so much. One clapped her hands with pleasure and said, "The little talk of her and the little voice and all!"

There are rats "too much" in this house, and I shall be hearing the "little talk" and the "little voices" and all as soon as I turn out the light. Gracious sakes, my dears, they begin already and *b'adún ane bôt!* [1]

Masan, Saturday, July 19.

Another rather dreadful town where I shall stay until Monday. When I get into a dreary town like this, I think how satisfied Miss D. would be to see me in surroundings as low as she suspects them to be.

Two women have been standing at the door looking at me. I am lying on my cot. They double up with laughter. One says (she is eating), "Here I stand and my plantain cannot find the path to my mouth for wonder!" And when I told them my mother had borne six children, she said, "All with bodies like you?

[1] "They are as noisy as people."

Not a black one in all?" They surely would have thought themselves cursed with such a brood.

Wednesday, July 23.

On Monday night we slept in the Ntum town of Wo'o. A large town full of waggish old men, full of interest in sex and the humor of that interest, like old French libertines. The men do not wear the headdress any more, but the women are all coiffed. A very beautiful art, I think, very becoming and curiously modifying to the face, so that the face of an Ntum woman, under its casque of brass studs and bead fringe, bridled through the nose with strings of blue or rose beads that pass back of the ear, and strapped across the forehead with a band of beads, — the face of the Ntum woman has a curiously disciplined and softened aspect, a kind of touching submission. I notice this very generally, and Miss E. notices it, too. At this town we had quite a success of curiosity. Miss E.'s bicycle was a great wonder. "And so the white man has white women," cries one silly; "I thought the tribe were just men, men!"

I am scribbling beside a wood fire in our little camp. A plantain roasts in the ashes for your child. An animal, some frightened little thing,

has just crashed through the underbrush near by.

Well, my dears, there is a chicken in the pot with noodles intilt, and on another section of the fire there is a corn custard stewing in another pot; and the best we can hope is that neither will be smoked. Bama is wiggling round on his poor old feet.

August 3.

Three old ladies sit watching me where I lie on my cot. One says, "So new!" Another says, "So fresh!" The last says, "Like a thing new-born!"

I am staying under the eaves of a very grand house. There is a kind of porch fenced in with slats of bamboo, and there are twenty pairs of eyes looking through the slats, children on their hands and knees and bigger ones higher up. I am tired of weeks of this.

I want to write very particularly of Wednesday, July 23, for I suppose I shall never pass another such day. We slept Tuesday night near the fork of the Ntem and the Kom, in a very quiet little settlement. We had a little town to ourselves and rested. Walked to a village in the afternoon, where I had a meeting. On Wednesday we walked through two hours of forest, real forest, but good walking, — a

trail, not a path. Lots of elephants had passed within a few days, and we saw the fresh tracks of a gorilla. Afterward we heard from the people that the gorilla, or more than one, had been seen that day. At about ten o'clock we came into the deserted villages of Mengama. In the palaver house a man sat by a bit of fire. My funny Ebolo in his tattered, his really catastrophic trousers, found an old harp in a house. He put aside his load, the kitchen load, all pots and pans, — and was a new man. He sang our adventures in a beautiful voice — a mock sentimental voice, all laughter and bathos, and mellow, mocking tremolo. I loved him for it. It was a purple patch, a ragged purple patch in the garment of the journey.

Another stretch of forest and we came into the new clearing of Asok. Later in the day I came back to this place and I will be telling you about it. We sat down in a little leaf hut, for the huts of this big settlement are all haphazard as yet, just leafy shelters in the lap of the forest. We boiled eggs and coffee. We were pretty tired. The meek faces of the Ntum women wondered at us from behind their beaded bridles. We walked two miles from here to an old and rather shabby town, Ekomedum, and here we pitched our tent.

In the afternoon I went back to Asok, through the beautiful forest, my dears, and in the beautiful afternoon, the beautiful autumnal afternoon of the dry season. In the middle of the leafy disorder of his clearing the headman sat in his little shelter — a young man, heavily braceleted with ivory. There were lots of men in this settlement, and presently many women gathered, all bustled and coiffed, and some rubbed with red powder. Every one was busy: men making furniture for the new town, women knotting little nets, shelling peanuts, grinding corn; and all this individual industry going forward in a kind of common gayety. I think I never saw so — how shall I give you an idea of it — so harmonious a scene. As I spoke to these people about the things of God there came a pause in the industry. The tool was arrested. The hands of the women bruising green leaves in wooden troughs and the grinders at the stones were idle. Men laughed with a kind of wonder. One woman flashed with interest behind her mask of purple tattoo and bright beads. Another bridled young thing gazed in a great stillness. I see this thing in my heart like a thing shut in from time and change, and I wish I may never forget it.

We spoke of the new Tribe and of its Chief.

Mba came to take me home, for he had heard tales of gorillas. The women followed me to say good-bye. They ran ahead shouting about the Commandments — these people dote on Commandments. And these brown creatures headed like flowers were crying to each other: "Don't steal. Don't commit adultery. Don't kill." I have seen so much that is sordid, so much that is vile, that I cannot think when I have seen an hour so unspoiled as this, though in "those days and in those streets," as Galsworthy says, there must be deeds of horror.

In Wo'o, where one felt the horror very near, there was a beautiful creature, a young woman with four red pompons in her headdress. Her body was rubbed with red powder; it was young and fine. There is a bloom of light on the outline of a body so covered, and in the shadows something luminous too. Strange, morbid beauty!

Lolodorf, Monday, August 11.

Well, my dears, I am back since Thursday from what I think to have been a good trip, as good as I could have wished. Gone forty-six days, and traveled four hundred and perhaps forty miles. I think I wrote from Ekin, where we camped for three nights; left there on Mon-

day morning and were glad to leave, after the ungrateful fashion of transients. We walked until one o'clock the next day, part of the time in the forest, but mostly now on a quite open path, for we were coming out at Ambam, the government post for the Ntum. We slept at Kulezok. We were awfully tired that day. In one of these settlements near Ambam we came on some Efulen people, who were mighty glad to see us, and called one to the other, "Ah Obam, Ah Bilo'o, come and see the faces of home!"

Now that we had got back to the neighborhood of the white man, the people were ruder but as curious as ever. In the afternoon I went to see Frau Mülling, the wife of the military executive at Ambam, about an hour's walk from the town in which we slept. I sent Mba Esone to tell her that I would call; in such an out of the way part of the world she could not be looking for callers. Ambam is a cluster of bark houses on a long hill; the houses lie along the crest, a rather noble and leisurely effect. The dwelling house is quite one of the most satisfactory I have seen in Africa — big windows let into the bark walls, no curtains, the floor covered with a coarse bamboo matting. Frau Mülling came halfway down the hill to meet me, pretty and friendly. Her husband was

away looking after the disorders across the Ntem; he was to be gone the night. She showed me into a room where there was a real bed, my dears, made up with an extravagance of linen. My room, she told me, and was much disappointed because I could not stay. She took me part of the way back, "a mile and a bittock," with a soldier to follow us because dusk was closing in and she was afraid of leopards.

In the morning Miss Eick and I parted. She went back to Elat by way of Mendim. I slept two nights on the Ambam road, and on the third day I turned off on to a by-path. From Ambam on I slept in towns where Efulen Station has placed black evangelists and teachers. These black men are doing good work, poor dears, and are homesick. Yes, and sometimes hungry.

From Akon Etyé I made a long day to Okon, met friends there, and the evangelist's little laughing daughter used to be in school at Efulen. Long after the eggs were bought and water was brought from the spring, and I had bathed and eaten and held a meeting, the evangelist and his wife and little Ngoneman and I talked the talk of friends. Metu'u m'Obam was the brother of Zua and helped me run away with her long ago. I lay on my cot under my net; the lantern lit the little shelter and

outside was the night. The mother and the father talked the talk of real people and the little girl laughed and then was wise, because she is only partly a little girl and partly a little woman. She is being nicely brought up and is not to marry until she is marriageable, and then only by her own choice. She has no little companions among the Ntum; she is quite a missionary's little girl. I got hungry, and we ate some fish that had been baked in a leaf. And so to bed.

From Okon to Nyabet is mostly by way of the forest, a beautiful path. In a village by the way I had a half-hour session with a proud blacksmith — the Ntum are great blacksmiths — and we parted with tears, or nearly. "We men," said he, "love to tell tales in the palaver house, and when we are telling our tales, where is the ring I will be showing the other men to prove that the white woman and I, we are friends?" "If you speak of tales," said I, "I love to tell a tale myself, and where is the present you will be giving me to show my friends when I say that I and the blacksmith from Akumbetye, we are friends?" More of such gentle hints, followed by an exchange of keepsakes. Brass for ivory, and some magic in the ivory, too.

THE HUNTER

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When we came out of the forest at about three o'clock, into the sunny upland valley of Nyabet, I met a happy man who had killed a monkey. He carried the most beautiful crossbow I have ever seen, and he carried it with the most noble gesture. 'T is a grand thing to kill a monkey; you rush home in a little wind of victory. I bought that crossbow the next day.

I spent Sunday at Mesamba. On Monday we cut up through the forest to Mfenda, and from there to Nkotoven, all day in *bilik* and *bekotok* — that is, old deserted clearing; nothing so hard to go through. And it rained. I got into Nkotoven, Bululand, at five o'clock. "Zamo Ntem," I call, and old Zamo sits up in her house.

"That little voice," says Zamo; "where have I heard that little voice before?"

"Zamo!"

And Zamo comes out slowly, blinking, and then quickly, and puts her arms around me and cries on my sleeve, because old Minkoe Ntem, her sister and my friend, is dead. And they told her at Efulen that I was gone beyond the seas. The owner of that little voice is embraced by many old friends. Zamo cannot sit down to chat; she has guests to feed. She leaves plantains in the kettle for my carriers, and is

off to beg a chicken for her dear child. Poor old woman — she goes far for her chicken; at ten I put out the light and go to sleep, Zamo still away. The young wives of her husband lie down and sleep, too. They are Christians, children of the childless Zamo. She is a wonderful person, with hundreds of converts to fill her heart.

In the morning we parted and I had a chicken all my own. She was going to show me a great piece of path, but the old legs got tired. She went too far for the chicken. That day we went through the Mebem bilik, — not bad. Ate fine pawpaws in a little clearing about a palm tree. Spent the night at Minkan in our own territory, where the people came far to hear us through the night and the rain, by the light of reed torches.

I think I shall never see old Zamo again.

THE END

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